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ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLEPLAYING GAMES

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1999
ISSUE #76

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

— Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken*

Cover
A bold warrior confronts the icy terrors of "Mertylmane's Road" in Dimitri Patelis' way-cool cover.

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The doctor might be mad, but his techniques are cutting edge.

THE HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF MIDNIGHT

BY RAYMOND E. DYER

Ramsay the damned

Artwork by Toren Atkinson
Cartography by Renee Ciske

Raymond works as a substitute teacher in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and studied English and History at Elizabethtown College. For more insight into the creation of this horrific RAVENLOFT® *adventure, see Raymond's guest editorial on page 4.*

"The House on the Edge of Midnight" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 4–6 good-aligned characters of levels 4–6 (about 24 total levels). It is best played on a rainy autumn night, with the lights turned low and candles around the table.

At least one magical weapon is required to complete the adventure successfully. At least one priest should be counted among the party's number, as should an elf or female character.

Although located in a pocket domain in the RAVENLOFT campaign setting, this adventure can be adapted for nearly any AD&D fantasy setting. Statistics for ghosts used in this adventure are drawn from *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts* (TSR #9355), but enough information is provided to run the adventure if this accessory is unavailable.

The new monsters featured in this module originally appeared in Michael D. Winkle's "Formidable Visitants" article in *DRAGON® Magazine* #252. Two magical items—Lord Ramsay's *intellect syringe* and the tome *The Revelations of the Prince of Twilight*—appeared in an article by Ted Zuvich in the same issue. DMs running the adventure without these articles might consider replacing the items with others of a similar nature. The *intellect syringe* is a difficult item to replace, but either a *libram of ineffable damnation* or a *crystal hypnosis ball* would serve well in place of Ramsay's magical book.

In "The House on the Edge of Midnight," the PCs wash ashore on a small island and are taken in by Doctor Blake Ramsay. At first their host seems friendly and congenial, but as the night draws on, clues indicate a darker side to Lord Ramsay.

The Tragedy

One hundred years ago, Blake Ramsay sailed from his home in Mordentshire toward the misty borders of the Sea of Sorrows. He and his family would find a

new home, he had determined, in a place where he could follow his arcane and medical pursuits without interruption from the harsh strictures and laws of the doctoral community.

The coast was long behind them when they spotted land. Having sailed far off the edge of every nautical chart in the Land of the Mists, Lord Ramsay felt certain that the location would prove ideal for his work. He promptly set about building a home, finding the silent natives of the island very helpful, and he settled down to study.

However, Lord Ramsay did not realize that he had become trapped by the dark powers. His ruthless experimental surgeries in Mordentshire, always on living patients and never with the benefit of anesthesia, attracted the attention of the dark powers, and now the good doctor promised to take his work to new extremes. He was being groomed to become the master of his own island of terror.

Lady Ramsay soon grew large with child, and a younger brother was born for their only daughter, Liza. However, young Gregory suffered deformities: He had a hunched back and oozing sores across his body. Lord Ramsay, knowing that his son would never be able to practice medicine, loathed Gregory.

Two years later, Lady Ramsay bore a second son, but Blake, Jr. was feebleminded. Lord Ramsay hated this child all the more, since in his estimation the mind is a man's greatest asset. Lord Ramsay estranged himself from his wife after her failures to produce a proper heir, delving more heartily into his work.

Determining that fate had declared that Liza would one day be responsible for carrying on his work, Lord Ramsay focused on his daughter. He began training her in the practice of anatomy and medicine.

Disaster struck when Liza was twelve. Lord Ramsay watched from the dining room window as his only hope of a legacy fell from the rocky cliffs before his home, hurled by the winds of a terrible storm. Panicked, he followed Liza, scaling three hundred feet of cliff by means of narrow pathways and treacherous leaps, but a hideous truth awaited him at the bottom.

Liza was dead. The fall had torn away limbs, and scarlet blood stained her blonde hair. Carrying his daughter, Blake Ramsay scaled the cliffs. The doctor returned to his laboratory in the basement without a word to his horror-stricken family, bolted the door, and worked feverishly for two weeks to return his daughter to life. On the fourteenth day after the tragedy, just after sundown, Lord Ramsay returned. Overcome with madness, he murdered his entire family in their sleep. From them he took the organs, limbs, and unbroken bones that Liza would need once the operations were complete.

The doctor worked into the night, stitching his daughter back together. A storm was brewing outside. That night, Lord Ramsay was not alone in his laboratory. The dark powers granted him his wish. At one minute before midnight, Liza Ramsay was reborn, and the clock in the dining room stopped counting time.

When she awoke, Blake was seized with terror. Liza's beautiful blue eyes had turned a foul, iridescent green. Responding quickly, he bound her to the operating table while he went to his family members in search of another pair of eyes that would perfect his beloved daughter. His wife and both sons had possessed brilliant blue eyes. No matter the replacements, Liza's eyes quickly returned to the same grotesque green minutes after the surgery was complete. Slowly, inexorably, a green pallor spread outward from the pupils, until no other color remained. The ghastly green eyes stared into Blake's soul, watching him no matter where he went in the room. Worse, the doctor feared that people would never take his daughter's intellect seriously if they could not look beyond her deformity. He felt certain that someone with the right eyes would make his daughter beautiful again.

Lord Ramsay locked his daughter in the laboratory. If these operations on his family could not serve to replace Liza's eyes, then he simply would await the arrival of someone new to the isle.

Lord Ramsay dragged the remains of his family downstairs and disposed of them the best way he could imagine. He stuffed them into the iron woodstove in the parlor and burned them, figuring they could atone for their failures by warming him for the night. Later, he sensed the three presences that now haunt his home. The spirits of his wife and sons lurk in the shadows of the house, tormenting their slayer and driving him deeper into madness.

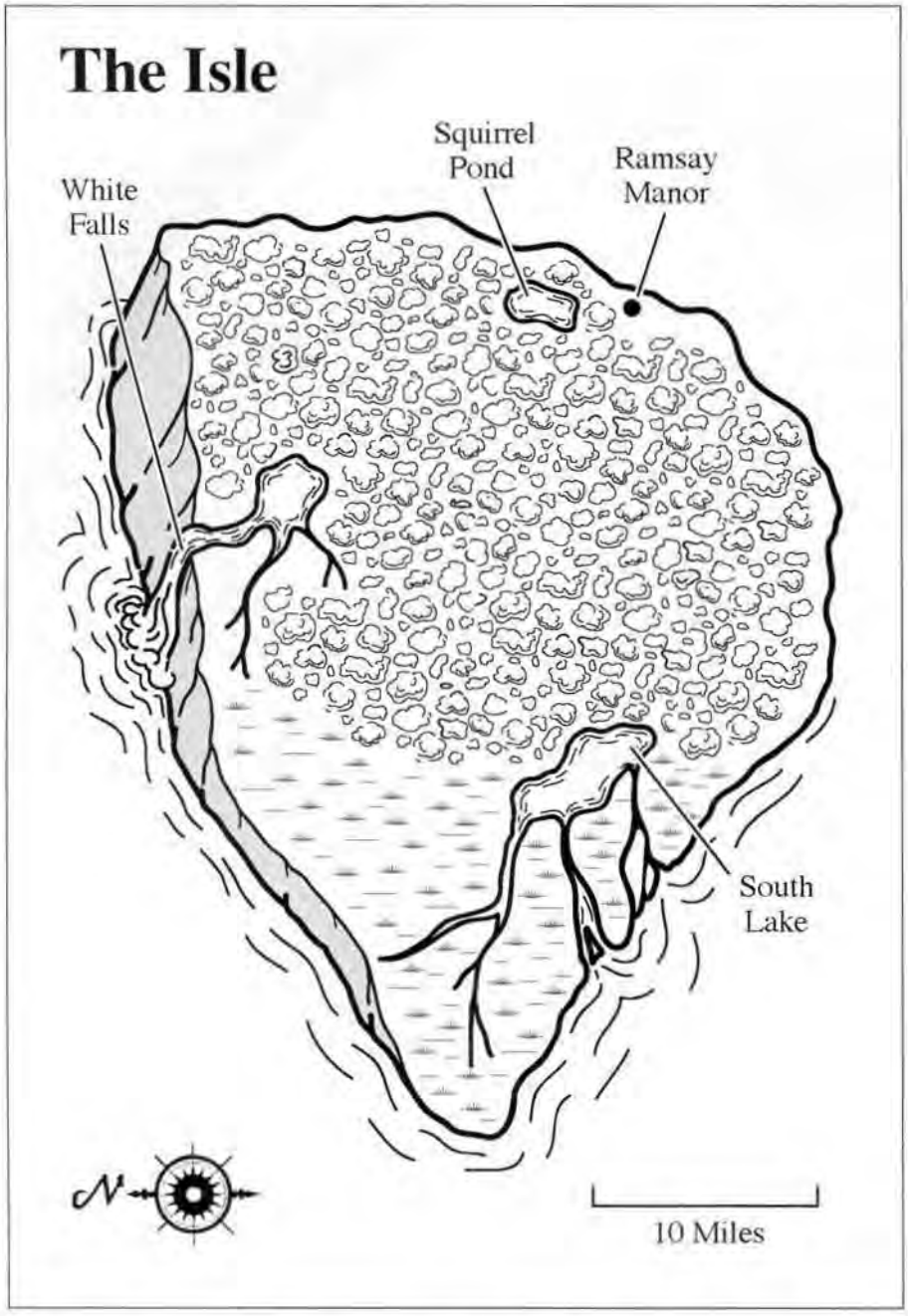
For decades, Lord Blake Ramsay has endured the last night of his family's life, their tormented spirits a constant reminder of his failure, as he sees it, to restore his daughter to perfect life.

Starting the Adventure

The adventure involves the PCs after a terrible storm at sea tears their ship apart. It is up to the DM to find an appropriate reason for the PCs to be on the boat. One method is to drop a rumor while the PCs are at repose in a port city such as Mordentshire or Martira Bay. Rumors concerning the islands of Markovia or Dominia, where mad doctors reputedly conduct inhumane experiments, could help set the mood for the adventure and provide an interesting juxtaposition when the PCs find themselves at the mercy of just the sort of man they had intended to confront!

Finding a captain and crew willing to journey away from the mainland into the Sea of Sorrows provides an opportunity for the DM to insert an important NPC into the adventure. Should an elf or charismatic female NPC already be traveling with the PCs, this encounter could be omitted from the adventure, but it is strongly suggested that the first target for Lord Ramsay's schemes not be a player character.

The only captain willing to partake in such a dangerous expedition is a young captain from Dementlieu named Claude d'Nerrare. Claude has blinded himself to the dangers of the Sea of Sorrows in the hopes of making a name for himself. His ship, the *Bluesprite*, is named for its figurehead, that of a well-endowed woman with gossamer wings, straining to hold her breath. The DM should do his best to develop Claude as a foolhardy, well-meaning character who, for all his faults, is still likeable. This will make his death in the storm more poignant.



Claude's first mate is a Sithican elf who goes by the name of Luther, since he has grown tired of men butchering his true elven name. Luther is the only NPC survivor of the shipwreck. Luther's beautiful elven eyes attract Lord Ramsay's attention away from those of any of the PCs, at least for the first night.

Luther (Lethellan Nomoris), male elf F3: AC 6; MV 12; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+3 (*cutlass +1*); Str 14, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 16; ML 15; AL LN; leather armor, *cutlass +1*. Luther is specialized in the use of his *cutlass +1*. He also carries a potion of *water breathing* with small nicks in the green-stained glass vial marking off the gradation of three doses.

Luther has a low regard for most men, though he enjoys the company of elves and human women. While not stupid, Luther is a glutton for flattery and lets down his guard easily after a few compliments. He signed on with Claude after finding that most sailors harbored a general distrust for members of his race. As first mate of the *Bluesprite*, he commanded the respect of the men who scoffed at him before, and many quickly learned that Luther could easily be won over with some well-practiced adulation.

Preparing the Adventure

The adventure is presented in two sections. This first, "The House," details Lord Ramsay's manor. Should PCs step outside the provided scenario, the DM can easily continue with the adventure, adjusting it for the party's actions. The second part, "Events," provides a path down which the adventure is likely to progress.

The following timeline outlines the adventure's chain of events. These events need not be played in order. Indeed, some might be avoided entirely by a clever party. Ideally, though, the adventure should find PCs heading toward the moment when they find Lord Ramsay's iron key and bring about Event 8: The Nightstorm.

Timeline of the Past

May 1, 387: Lord Ramsay and his family sail from Mordentshire.

May 14, 387: Lord Ramsay and his family arrive on the isle.

October 17, 393: Liza falls from the cliffs. Lord Ramsay locks himself in the laboratory.

October 31, 393: Lord Ramsay makes a pact with the dark powers and murders his family. Liza is reborn as a flesh golem. Helen, Gregory, and Blake, Jr. become ghosts bound to the house.

393 to Present: Lord Ramsay operates on natives, shipwreck survivors, pirates, and explorers in vain attempts to restore Liza's eyes.

Order of Events

Event 1: After washing ashore on the island, the PCs surmount the cliffside and find the manor.

Event 2: PCs meet Lord Ramsay.

Denizens of the Isle

Should the PCs desire to explore more of the isle, the following encounters are suggested. Some of them, such as the hairy spiders and large bats, may also be used inside the manor if the PCs seem to be having too easy a time.

Roll 1d6 or choose:

1. Large bats (3d6): AC 8; MV 3, fly 15 (C); HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SA 1% chance per point of damage inflicted to contract rabies; SD –3 bonus to AC vs. missiles fired by opponents with less than 13 Dexterity; SZ M; ML 6; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 35; *MM*/15.

These hunters stalk prey in swarms all across the isle.

2. Hairy spiders (1d3): AC 8; MV 12, web 9; HD 1–1; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (save at +2); SZ T (6" diameter); ML 10; INT low (5); AL NE; XP 65; *MM*/326.

While dangerous in hordes, these creatures can be effectively used as the PCs are breaking camp in the morning. A PC awakes to find a spider poised on his arm or leg, staring intently at him, belying a cruel cunning as if it were just waiting for the right moment to sink in its fangs ...

3. Cannibal zombies (3d4): AC 7; MV 6; HD 2+2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (claw) or 1d2 (bite); SA poison (failure indicates transformation into a cannibal zombie); SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold* and poison; SZ M; ML 12; INT non (0); AL CE; XP 270; *Ravenloft MCA3*/122.

These unfortunates are victims of Lord Ramsay who have undergone his tortures and escaped the manor. One by one they fell to the curse of cannibalism. Each of these zombies is missing no less than one eye, and most have had limbs amputated by the doctor during their stay in the manor.

4. Ravenloft flesh golem (1): AC 6; MV 12; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8; SA strangulation; SD +1 or better weapons to hit, see below; SZ M; ML 20; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 5,000; *Ravenloft MCA3*/47. If the golem hits with both hands in the same round, it strangles its opponent on successive rounds for 3d8 points of damage per round. It is immune to cold and lightning, and it is unaffected by spells that do not directly deal damage.

Lord Ramsay has made many mistakes while trying to comprehend the nature of his daughter's curse. One of these creatures wanders the isle, aghast at its hideous form. This hateful creature loathes only one thing more than its own existence—Doctor Ramsay.

5. Natives (2d4+2): AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear); SZ M; ML 10; INT average (8); AL N; XP 35. Each member of this hunting band carries a pair of javelins, which he hurls before entering melee. The men are lean and muscular. Their skin is pale white, and they wear the hides of deer felled in the forest. They speak rarely, and only in their own tongue.

The natives learned long ago that Lord Ramsay and all those associated with him mean trouble. They are very cautious of PCs, especially armed ones. They are also a superstitious lot and flee in panic from any showy display of magic.

6. Unseen trackers: The PCs sense that someone is following them. However, the being responsible for the sounds the PCs hear cannot be seen. Perhaps it is the flesh golem stalking them in hopes of finding an ally in its crude schemes against Lord Ramsay, or perhaps it is a native scout hoping to learn the PCs' motives. Play this encounter to keep the PCs guessing and looking deeper into every shadow.

Event 3: Lord Ramsay serves the PCs a late dinner while his homonculous spies on them.

Event 4: Lord Ramsay attempts to abduct the chosen NPC. The PCs thwart Ramsay and "slay" him. Ramsay disappears via his *shadow door* ability.

Event 5: While searching the manor, the PCs find the door to Liza's prison. Playing the innocent victim, she tells them of the iron key.

Event 6: The PCs unearth Lord Ramsay's journal and search the master bedroom.

Event 7: Infuriated by the intrusion upon his personal rooms, the doctor attacks.

Event 8: PCs find the iron key and release Liza. The Nightstorm begins.

Event 9: The griffon topiary in the hedge maze transforms and flies the PCs to the mainland.

The House

Except where noted otherwise, Lord Ramsay's manor is constructed of aged wood. Windows bear a thick layer of dust and must be wiped before they can be seen through. Ceilings are generally eight feet high, and the furniture shows signs of disrepair.

Ground Floor

1. Parlor.

> The door creaks open into a dusty parlor. A large chair is discernable beneath inches of dust. An end table rests beside a large couch. A scrawny brown rat scurries along the far wall.
>
> In the corner to your right stands a large, black iron woodstove. Its double doors are closed. Behind the stove is a wall-hanging that is creased in the middle. There is a painting on the top half, but some sort of writing seems to cover the lower portion.
>
> Steps climb to a second floor balcony, and a dining room stretches out of sight to your left. The house is completely still—quiet enough for you to hear the buzzing of flies from across the room.

The strange buzzing foreshadows an encounter with the sawflies that lair in this room. They do not attack the party until the doctor wills it. Details on the attack of the sawflies can be found in Event 6: Finding the Iron Key.

Demonic sawflies (2): AC 7; MV 12, fly 12 (B); HD 2; hp 11, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SA blood drain (1d4 points of damage), *summon swarm*; SD shrinking; SZ M; ML 12; INT semi (3); AL NE; XP 175; New monster.

Innocence is the first victim in this dark and timeless tale.

Either sawfly immediately shrinks to the size of a gnat if reduced below half of its total hit points. At that point it attempts to flee, dodging any attack with a successful saving throw vs. wands.

When attacking, demonic sawflies appear as giant, reddish-brown daddy longlegs with fly's wings. They can bound up the stairs, shattering the banister and striking with a +2 attack bonus for the charge.

The wall-hanging is actually a calendar. The painting is old and faded but clearly shows the port of Mordentshire as it appeared nearly 100 years ago. The "writing" below shows the days and months of the calendar year 393.

The iron woodstove in the corner contains the ashen remains of Blake, Jr. and Gregory. Helen obsessively protects the ashes of her children. She uses her *portal control* ability to keep the woodstove sealed. Any attempt to destroy or damage the woodstove causes her to manifest and attack the perpetrator.

Helen's statistics are presented in the "The Ramsays" sidebar.

2. Dining Room.

A long, dust-covered oak table dominates the dining room. Across the room is an open doorway into the kitchen. Flanking that doorway are a tall grandfather clock and a handsome hickory curio.

The grandfather clock has stopped at one minute before midnight and cannot be reset. Any PC who attempts to move the hands of the clock receives a sharp but harmless jolt of electricity. Persistent attempts (or an attempt to damage the clock) result in a flash of electricity for 2d6 points of damage.

The curio is not locked and contains three shelves of dusty, finely crafted figurines: dogs, lions, and elephants carved from ivory, obsidian, and clay. One of these figurines, an obsidian lion, is magical, although nothing in its appearance differentiates it from the other figurines.

The lion is a *figurine of wondrous power*. The *lion* is activated by throwing it to the floor, and it obeys whoever activated it until that person wills it to return to statue form. When slain, the *obsidian lion* transforms into broken chips of obsidian. A *limited wish* spell can repair the shattered figurine.

Obsidian lion (1): AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+1; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1–3/1–3/1–6; SA rear claws (1–4/1–4); SZ M; ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 120.

3. Kitchen. Lord Ramsay's kitchen is as dusty and untidy as the rest of the manor. PCs looking about here find scantily supplied cabinets, only one of which shows any sign of use. Cobwebs have been swept aside from several canisters of dried spices. Below this cabinet, a broad section of the countertop has been wiped clean of dust. The stove is still warm, and the embers within glow.

The doctor rarely feels the need to eat. When Lord Ramsay is warned of approaching guests by the dark powers of Ravenloft, he sends out his homonculous to bring back a young deer (using a small *bag of holding* to haul the carcass), which Ramsay prepares as his guests surmount the cliffside and cross the island. This explains the relatively clean area of counter space, the recently used spices, and the warm stove (wherein the prepared venison is kept warm).

4. New Laboratory.

This room is a chaotic jumble of small bookstands and end tables, all buried under manuals, tomes, and scrolls. Some of the books remain open, with dog-eared pages curled upward and yellowed from exposure. Others are piled askew or lie on the floor as if tossed there long ago and forgotten.

A metal table stands in the center of the room. The table is equipped with five leather restraints to secure hands, feet, and neck. A tray beside the table holds a series of polished razors and scissors, some gauze, a syringe, and a ball of twine. Unlike the dust-covered books and scrolls, the table and tray gleam and sparkle with cleanliness.

Should PCs search the laboratory, they find the books to be manuals and treatises detailing surgery, anatomy, and necromancy. If collected and culled for its finest bits, the material is sufficient to provide a mage with the information

found in a *manual of golems*, although the creature produced is a Ravenloft flesh golem. Organizing the contents of this room requires two days, and several weeks of study are required before work can begin on a golem.

Other items of interest in this room include the doctor's *intellect syringe*, which sits alongside the other surgical tools on the tray, and a single tome that rests alone on a prominent reading stand. This tome is bound in fine crimson leather and has an iron crown embossed on its cover. It is a copy of *The Revelations of the Prince of Twilight*, which recently washed ashore on a bit of flotsam. Lord Ramsay has found it exceedingly complex, but the concept of conjuring Liza's "other half"—a healthier, prettier half—interests him.

A PC paging through *The Revelations* finds that it begins with a lengthy introduction, which is followed immediately by the statement, "At the beginning, we were meant to have two spirits, one mortal, the other supernatural." The introduction concludes with the lines, "Once sufficient time has passed, and sufficient sacrifices have been made, the two spirits exist in harmony, and may become one once again." Following that are two rituals, *conjure sundered soul* and *spirit's reunification*. Both spells are fully detailed in *Dragon Magazine* #252 (pages 87–89).

5. Pantry. Lord Ramsay's pantry is filled with long shelves stretching into the shadows. The shelves are lined with moldering, mostly empty boxes. Those few boxes that contain dried goods have disintegrated over the years. Near the northern archway is a wooden crate containing several wrapped wheels of cheese. Mold has nearly claimed them, as the poor souls who washed ashore with them died weeks past. It is from this box that the doctor takes the cheese he serves the PCs in Event 2.

6. The Hedgerow. The PCs might seek Lord Ramsay in the hedgerow, but he is not there. The doctor has not walked these paths in decades. While the ghosts of Helen and the boys wander most of the house at will, they consider the hedgerow to be their private sanctum and haunt all who travel therein.

The thick hedge walls are eight feet high—tall enough to isolate PCs wandering afield. In addition to the ghosts, PCs routinely find their cloaks and clothes catching on briars and sharp branches.

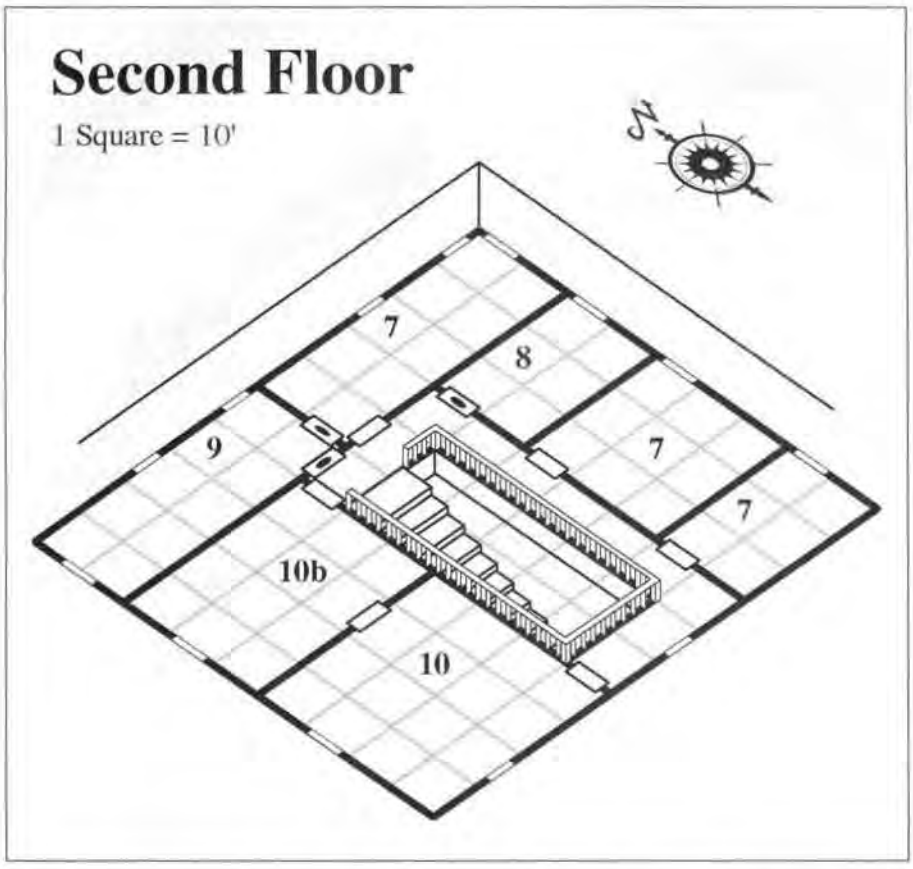
6A. The Topiary.

> You stand before a large topiary cut in the form of a giant griffon. The beast's wings spread out over two wooden benches positioned at its flanks.

Helen grew this creature herself in the years before she died. As Lord Ramsay estranged himself from his family, Helen devoted herself to her garden. After the curse settled upon the isle, the topiary became a lingering vestige of goodness. Any PC who comes within arm's reach of the griffon is affected by a *remove fear* spell.

If the PCs enter the hedgerow after hearing Gregory's laughter at the top of the cellar steps (see Event 6: Finding the Iron Key), inform the first PC to approach the topiary that the boy's laughter trails off to the north and east, toward area **6B**.

6B. Gregory's Rest. Positioned in this enclave is a low marble bench. In years past, members of the Ramsay family came here to while away the hours or



contemplate pressing matters. Now, Gregory sits here, awaiting a playmate. When a PC arrives, he manifests. The sight of the boy's desiccated form—one arm crudely amputated, his body horribly burned so that his parched flesh is indistinguishable from his nightclothes, his black eye sockets gazing emptily—is enough to warrant a horror check.

After revealing himself, Gregory flies forward, still laughing, and attempts to pass through the first PC who beholds his ghostly form. After one such attack, the ghost-child vanishes in a cloud of thick, sulfurous smoke.

6C. Helen's Trap.

> A woman's voice whispers from around the corner, deep and full. "Come to me," she says. "I can help you. I can give you escape from this cursed isle!"

The voice belongs to Helen. She tries to lure a PC south from the point marked on the map, then calls him west at the T-shaped intersection. In actuality, Helen is lurking invisibly to the east, using her *ventriloquism* ability. As the PC turns to walk west, she manifests, attacks from behind with her fiery touch, and attempts to push her victim into the covered, spike-bottomed pit.

PCs falling into the 10'-deep pit suffer 1d6 points of damage plus an additional 2d4 points from the spikes. Pulling oneself off the spikes causes 1d4 points of damage unless help and extreme care is taken by PCs offering assistance.

After attacking, Helen vanishes in cloud of charred woodsmoke, reminiscent of the scent the PCs may have experienced near the woodstove in area **1**.

6D. Blake, Jr.'s Rest.

> Ahead, you catch the scent of charred wood and smoke, but from the path leading east comes the sound of a

This is an attempt on the part of the ghosts to divide the PCs. The odor of smoke and charred wood is attributable to Helen, but she does not manifest at this time. The crying comes from Blake, Jr., who waits in the open area to the east. The first PC to enter the "clearing" sees nothing more than a little boy wearing a hooded cloak huddled on a marble slab. As Blake, Jr. is approached, however, he reaches up and pulls back his hood, revealing a charred skull, his sparse hair matted against wrinkled flesh. Sadly, he cries, "I'm all burnt up!" The boy then disappears.

While not physically damaging, this is certainly a morale breaker. A DM might insist on both fear and horror checks if players do not roleplay their characters' response suitably.

Helen waits until the horror has passed before manifesting directly behind a PC, attacking once, then vanishing once again.

Second Floor

7. Bedrooms. These rooms were once occupied by Gregory, Blake, Jr., and the family servants. The rooms have since been cleaned and prepared for company. Each has a single four-poster bed, vanity, nightstand, and wardrobe.

The clothes in the wardrobes have been beaten and aired recently. PCs familiar with current Mordentshire fashion realize that the clothing is terribly out of date. Should the PCs accept Lord Ramsay's invitation to stay (see Event 2), Lord Ramsay offers the clothes to any PCs who require a change of attire.

8. Helen's Sewing Room. The door to this room is locked, and neither Lord Ramsay nor his wife's ghost ever comes here. Both find that the old room harbors too many painful memories.

PCs who successfully bypass the lock find the room almost impenetrably dark. A black tarp has been tacked over the window frame to cover a pane of broken glass (broken by Helen long ago in a fit of rage), and the tall bolts of cloth and crates of sewing materials stacked here throw the room into deep shadows.

This room is not without its terrors. PCs moving into the darkness of this

room find a rare horror known as living hair. At the time of Liza's accident, Helen was hard at work making a new doll for her daughter's collection (located in area 9). Liza was saddened by the prospect of leaving Mordentshire and the toys she dearly loved, and Helen was intent on lightening her spirits.

Forming the body from some bits of cloth and stuffing, Lady Ramsay chose to use her own luxuriant hair to complete the doll. She cut a length off, much more than she would ever need, and had begun work on the doll when tragedy befell her family.

As the curse overtook the isle, the unfinished doll left in the sewing room transformed into living hair. When PCs enter the sewing room, the creature attempts to use its 80% chance to Hide in Shadows to remain unseen, striking from behind with surprise. At first the creature appears to be nothing more than a mass of hair somehow standing upright in a humanoid form. Upon its death, though, the doll at its core can be seen, its painted blue eyes still vibrant as the day Helen Ramsay first brushed them.

Living hair (1): AC 7; MV 12; HD 5; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6; SA thief abilities, strangulation; SD regenerates 2 hit points/round, suffers half damage from blunt weapons; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 16; INT average (9); AL NE; XP 975; New monster.

9. Liza's Bedroom. The doors to this room remain locked at all times, and with good reason. Helen Ramsay's ghost guards her daughter's belongings passionately, dreaming of the day when Liza returns to play with them again.

Living inside the walls around the twin doorframes is a swarm of eerily silent scarab beetles attracted to the tomblike atmosphere of the house. If a PC tries to enter Liza's room, Helen shifts the loose boards that form the top of the doorframe, resulting in a groaning from above and a harmless scarab or two dropping onto the neck and shoulders of the person nearest the door. Should PCs ignore this warning, Helen shatters the doorframe, dropping a swarm of scarab beetles that attacks anyone within five feet of either door.

Anyone who visits Lord Ramsay must stay for the feast ...

Once unleashed, the swarm crawls under clothing and burrows into flesh.

Further attempts to enter this room cause Helen to manifest in the doorway and fight to keep intruders away. If the battle goes poorly for Helen, both Blake, Jr. and Gregory appear to support their mother. As is also the case with the hedgerow, Lord Ramsay does not enter his daughter's old bedroom.

A thick layer of dust covers the furniture in this room. A small child's bed with faded pink sheets rest against the far wall, and stuffed dolls stand in neatly arranged poses on a shelf over the headboard. A tiny bookshelf holds children's picture books.

Scarab beetle swarm (1): AC 4; MV 6, burrow 3; HD 5; hp 19; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg special; SZ T; ML 13; INT non (0); AL N; XP 420; *RAVENLOFT MCA3/16*. The swarm covers a 10' × 10' area, inflicting damage to everyone within that space. Wounds are equal to half the hit points of the swarm plus the target's base AC. Beetles cling to any PC fleeing the area of effect and continue to inflict damage until destroyed. Edged weapons inflict one point of damage to the swarm and full damage to anyone covered by it. A medium-sized PC can cause the swarm 1d6 points of damage per round by dropping to the floor and rolling about.

10. Master Bedroom.

An unmade four-poster bed stands between the windows of the master bedroom. Near the bed, a book lies open upon the nightstand. Above the headboard hangs a painting of Lord and Lady Ramsay. He appears much younger in the painting, but a young girl seated between them bears closer resemblance to her mother. Someone has cut a wide slash through the painting, leading from Lord Ramsay to his wife but missing the girl completely.

Selected Notes from the Journal of Lord Blake Ramsay

14 May 387 – We have finished the house. The kind men who helped us have taken leave and returned to their homes in the west wood. I believe wisdom prevailed when I chose this isle for our new home.

Liza plays in the fields, and Helen is pleased with the idea of a hedgerow. I have warned them both of the fens to the west. Any manner of creature could dwell in so murky a place. I fear for my daughter sometimes. She is my only child—my only hope to be remembered when I die.

Regular journal entries follow. Only a few passages stand out:

... managed to keep the plant alive for two weeks after plucking. Chlorophyll content actually increased ...

... Death occurred by the spontaneous collision of so many molecules that the flower tore itself apart. I believe I have witnessed a complete implosion of the plant matter. This is tragic, for I believe I was very close to success ...

... not sure I fully understand it, but after two years of living on this new isle, I believe I have found the secret to instilling life in dead plant matter. A batch of hardy swamproot has lived a full month with no dirt or water, only regular injections of the serum. If only my tests on the natives could be so successful ...

The following passage is written in a mad, scrawling hand that contrasts with the cramped-but-neat style of the rest of the journal:

October 30, 393—Liza is dead! Oh, how can this be? My efforts have proven vain, the plant and animal kingdoms too broadly separated for any of my recent studies to be useful. The fall caused too much internal damage. Many organs were crushed, and an arm was severed by the sharp cliff stones. But what is that compared to the loss of her precious mind? My daughter! My loving, intelligent daughter! I shall set this catastrophe aright! You will not die, my beloved.

Gregory needs no mind, for his deformities all but exclude him from society. Should he enter the world to speak my praises, he would be shunned and ridiculed. He shall provide you the life you need, fair Liza.

Likewise, Blake, Jr. will become nothing more than a dull fool. It is clear from one look upon his glassy countenance that his growth has been stopped by some dark power. He, too, shall supply the limbs. The organs must come from Helen! Yes, my petite wife, you shall be the perfect donor for young Liza.

... bodies had to be disposed of somehow. Why not let them warm the place? I thought. Heaven forgive me. I believe I felt Helen in the room as the fires burned away the remains. But if she has come to haunt me, then it is the least of my worries ...

... keep the girl in the laboratory until someone with suitable eyes comes. Fate shall provide ...

... Something perplexes me, though. By my best estimates, two days have passed since Hallow's Eve, yet the heavens remain unmoved. It is still one minute to midnight, by the moon and the dining room clock, which has stopped. I have no idea at what time I should set it ...

... It seems the sun never shall shine again on my household. What have I done?

The journal entries continue for another sixty or seventy pages from this point, and they vary in their degree of coherence and legibility. Often, Lord Ramsay is writing to his daughter, who is apparently trapped in the cellar. The last entry, freshly written, reads as follows:

I dreamt of visitors while I slept. Awaking, I peered out the window to see a small raft carrying the survivors of a shipwreck toward the isle. 'Tis an omen! Oh, darling, I shall yet find the eyes for your pretty face. Then I shall resume my studies. When I have grown too old to continue, you will be of marrying age, I am sure, and then you will take my work to the mainland and find a husband who will publish these findings, and the two of you shall live happily on the proceeds of my life's work which shall be known throughout the land!

They are nearing the shore. I must prepare the guestrooms. Prepare, Liza, for our wait is nearly over!

The book on the nightstand is Blake Ramsay's journal. A cursory examination reveals that most of the entries are dated "October 30, 393." Characters skimming through the journal learn tidbits as provided in the "Selected Notes from the Journal of Lord Blake Ramsay" sidebar.

Lord Ramsay keeps a locked strongbox under the bed. It is not trapped. Inside the box are his most precious documents. PCs find the beginnings of lab write-ups, carefully drawn diagrams of the human anatomy with cryptic annotations ("Sensitive if too much spleen" or "Increases threshold of pain"), and a letter Liza wrote long ago, before her fall, expressing her love for her father. Until the PCs make an enemy of Lord Ramsay (see Event 4), the doctor keeps the iron key to area **13** in the strongbox as well. After the PCs talk to Liza, though, Lord Ramsay ties the key to his belt, feeling much safer with it on his person. If the PCs find the key in this room, touching it immediately brings about the effects of the Nightstorm, explained in Event 8.

At some point while the PCs search the master bedroom, have individual PCs roll a Wisdom check. Those who succeed see the form of a human female materialize beneath the top sheet on the bed. For a moment the shape remains still, but then the head turns slowly to the side, as if regarding the PCs. This allows the PCs one round to respond and direct their attention fully upon the sheet.

The sheet (for that is what the horrid creature upon Lord Ramsay's bed truly is) lurches into an upright position, maintaining its vaguely humanoid appearance as it waves, flutters, and gyrates in the air. All PCs focused on this event must make a successful fear check or run screaming from the room. The sheet lopes after the first PC to flee, trying to envelop the victim in its suffocating white folds.

Sheet (1): AC 9; MV 12; HD 6; hp 26; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–4/1–4/1–2; SA poison, suffocation; SD blunt weapons inflict 1 point of damage per hit (plus magical and Strength bonuses); SZ M; ML 14; INT average (9); AL CE; XP 1,400; New monster.

10b. Bath. The chamber adjacent to the master bedroom contains a bath, a wash

basin, a rack of dusty towels, and a cedar cabinet filled with shelves of folded linens.

Set into the ceiling of the room is a trapdoor leading to the attic (area **11**). A short cord hanging from the trapdoor allows PCs to reach up and pull it open. Opening the trapdoor unfolds a set of creaky steps. The steps are safe to climb.

11. Attic (not shown on map). The attic is as large as the second floor of the manor, but the ceiling is pitched and varies in height from three to seven feet. The trapdoor leading to the attic is located in area **10b**. (See above for details.)

Pulling open the trapdoor releases the stench of a charnel house, but the zombies trapped above never leave their lair until summoned by Lord Ramsay during Event 7. These creatures are the undead remains of past victims in the doctor's quest to restore life to his daughter. Some were natives of the island; others are desiccated sailors washed ashore in the night. All have been drained of cerebral fluid and have had their eyes surgically removed.

The zombies attack any PC who attempts to climb the rickety wooden steps that unfold from the trapdoor. Such attacks gain a +2 bonus due to higher ground. If the PCs battle the zombies, Lord Ramsay does not intercede, hoping that the party is defeated.

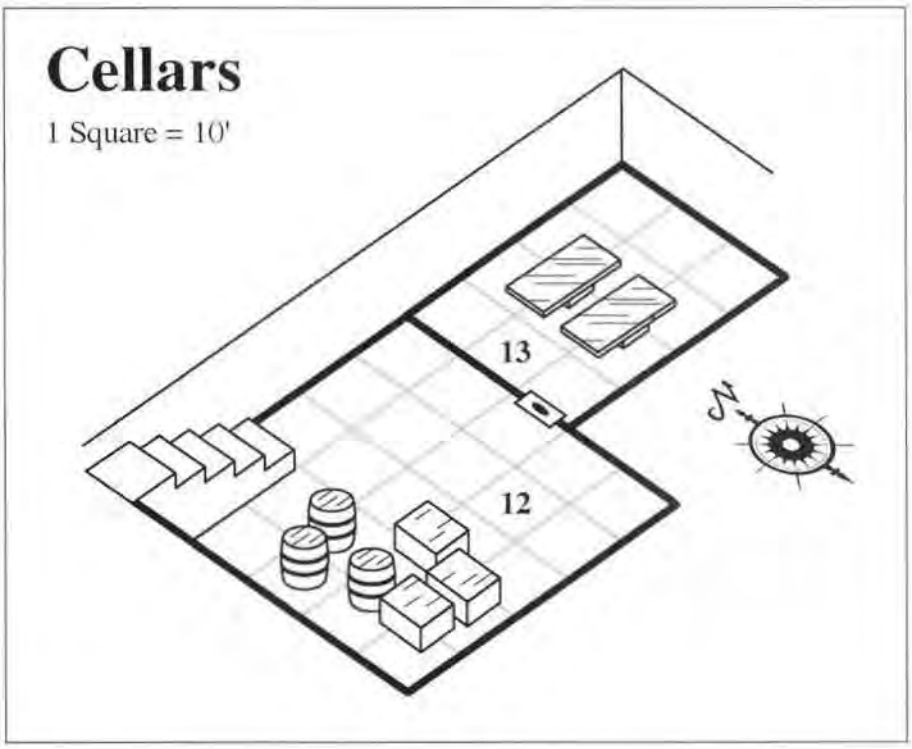
Should the PCs climb the steps, they find a cleverly constructed winch and pulley system attached with a harness at one end. The whole is constructed to easily swing out over the trapdoor opening. Lord Ramsay uses this device to haul the bodies of his victims into the attic.

The attic itself is dark. The zombies have destroyed everything of interest, leaving only a carpet of splinters and torn fabric across the floor.

Zombies (11): AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SD immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear,* poison, paralysis, death magic, and cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; *MM*/373.

Cellars

12. Storage. PCs require a light source to discern the contents of this root cellar:



Crates and barrels stacked in odd piles around this room cast long shadows to the south. These shadows are absorbed into utter darkness among the thick tangle of webs in that portion of the room.

A large iron door has been set in the stonework of the east wall, a formidable lock built into the door beneath the knob. Soft crying comes from behind the iron door.

The crates stacked around the cellar contain meat that Blake feeds his daughter. The meat is old and crawling with maggots. The barrels contain foul water.

Before leaving Mordentshire, Lord Ramsay hired a local witch to brew him a salve that would seal the door to his laboratory from anyone he did not want to open it. When rubbed into the keyhole and onto the proper matching key, this salve renders the lock immune to picking attempts and *knock* spells, though greater magic penetrates it. A *dispel magic* successfully cast against 12th-level magic undoes the witch's magic, enabling PCs to pick the lock or open the door magically. The iron key to this door is hidden in area **10**.

Opening the door by any means other than the iron key brings the Nightstorm, as detailed under Event 8 below.

Neither Helen nor either of the boys ever comes here. They are repulsed by this area just as Lord Ramsay is repulsed by the hedgerow (area **6**).

From this room, PCs unable to free Liza may converse with her through the laboratory door. The PCs' first meeting with Lord Ramsay's daughter is detailed in Event 5: Meeting Liza.

The webs in the southern portion of the room are of the living variety. They obey Lord Ramsay's wishes, fight on his behalf, or attack anyone who has made an enemy of the doctor.

Living webs (2): AC 9; MV 6; HD 4; hp 19, 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6; SA *lightning bolt* (inflicts 3d4 points of damage, usable twice/turn); SD electricity increases web's size; immune to fire, water, heat, and cold; divided by edged weapons; suffers half damage from blunt weapons; SZ M; ML 9; INT semi (4); AL N; XP 650; *MCA3*/117.

13. The Old Laboratory. Any PC who enters this room encounters Liza and inadvertently triggers the Nightstorm, as detailed in Events 5 and 8 respectively.

Two steel tables stand in the middle of the floor, and the walls are lined with shelves full of alchemical apparatus, surgical supplies, and the like. Among these supplies is a vial containing the salve Lord Ramsay used to secure the door to the laboratory. (See area **12** above.) Enough remains of the oily elixir to coat two locks and their associated keys.

A bookshelf contains several tomes on anatomy and alchemy. One tome, titled *The Alchemist's Codex*, describes half of the process for creating homonculi. (The process requires an alchemist and a wizard. The tome describes the alchemist's half of the labor. When Lord Ramsay first set about creating his homonculous, he worked in tandem with a Mordentshire witch who possessed the spells and knowledge needed to complete the creation.) *The Alchemist's Codex* could be sold to an interested buyer for 500 gp.

Events

This section of the adventure provides a path down which the adventure is likely to progress. DMs are encouraged to allow player ingenuity to guide the adventure down new avenues, with the Nightstorm providing a framework for the eventual conclusion.

Event 1: The Arrival

The adventure begins with the PCs' life raft washing ashore on Lord Ramsay's island. Individual DMs are encouraged to incorporate the events leading up to this occurrence into their own campaigns as they see fit. The following text may be read or paraphrased to the players as they arrive on the island:

> The storm tore your ship apart, leaving you stranded on a flimsy raft without food or water. Your clothes are tattered and soaked. Luckily, though, you managed to salvage your most precious personal belongings.
>
> The turbulent sea carries your tiny craft into calmer waters, and soon you are engulfed by an impenetrable mist.
>
> Hours pass, and still the sun has not risen. When the mist parts, you find the currents pushing you toward a rocky shore at the base of a towering cliff. With newfound vigor, you drag the raft ashore and look up the steep precipice, seeing stormclouds and a crescent moon directly overhead.
>
> The rocks that form the narrow shoreline offer no sanctuary. The sea seems calm now, but fomenting tides could dash you against the rocks and shatter your bones with ease. Your only escape from the treacherous sea is up the narrow, natural outcroppings and ledges that scale the cliff face. Apart from these abundant handholds, you see only the underside of a thick bank of fog that wreaths the island near the top of the cliff.

Read or paraphrase the following only if Luther is with the party:

> Luther, the elven first mate of the *Bluesprite*, crouches and scowls at the cliffside. After a moment he sighs and, with little more than a glance back in your direction, steps toward the nearest outcropping to begin his ascent.

Luther is exhausted and angry at the situation. So long as the PCs do not take his attitude as a personal affront, he holds nothing against them. Should he survive the impending ordeal, he could even befriend the PCs.

Climbing should be harrowing, with rocks skittering out of sight after near missteps, but no one should be injured except in cases of extreme negligence. The cliffs rise three hundred feet from the sea, so any character who slips with no chance of being caught or snagged is likely plummeting to his death.

Each character needs to make two successful climbing checks to scale the cliff face. PCs receive a +40% modifier to climbing rolls for "abundant handholds." Unskilled climbers have an 80% chance to scale the cliffside, modified for armor and race as detailed in Chapter 14 of the *Player's Handbook*.

A PC may attempt to grab hold of a falling character; such an action requires a successful Dexterity check (to grab the falling character) followed by another successful climbing check (to secure oneself while holding onto the falling character). If the climbing check fails, both PCs fall. The DM might allow falling PCs to make a Dexterity check to catch the rock face. If successful, the PCs do not fall; however, they must make an extra climbing check to reach the top.

As PCs reach the top, the DM may either paraphrase or read the following to the PCs:

> The clouds part, and the faint light of a crescent moon reveals a modest two-story home perched near the cliff's edge. A small porch with three steps leads to the front door. The paint has begun to chip, the roof has lost many of its ghostly-gray tiles, and ivy grows thick along the walls. The windows are all dark.
>
> Just as it seems certain that no one could live in this old ruin, an ominous light appears in an upstairs window. As quickly as it appeared, the flickering light is gone, leaving you to wonder whether you even saw it at all.

Event 2: The Greeting

The PCs might feel compelled to knock if they believe someone is home; desperate for shelter, they might also enter the house uninvited. Neither action changes the mood of the greeting they receive from Lord Ramsay. PCs who knock simply meet him at the front door rather than inside the manor.

If PCs scout the perimeter of the house, describe for them the tall, thorny wall of the hedge-maze behind the house. Their position also commands a view of the lowlands of the isle, which lead down a gentle slope to the edge of a thick, crowded forest of deciduous trees in autumnal shades. Remind those PCs intent on scaling the hedgerow of their exhaustion and the chills of being soaked to the bone in the middle of the night. This should serve as discouragement enough for the victims of such a recent shipwreck, but those who do not turn away find themselves at the mercy of Lord Ramsay's family before they ever meet the doctor himself. (See area **6**.)

When the PCs first enter the parlor (area **1**), the description of that room should be read or paraphrased to them.

If the party enters without waiting for Lord Ramsay to reach the door, he

appears on the second-floor balcony 1 round after they enter the parlor. PCs who make a successful Wisdom check note that the old floorboards do not creak to announce his arrival.

Whether the PCs meet Lord Ramsay at the door or greet him once inside the house, the following text describes the PCs' first encounter with the mad doctor:

> The middle-aged man before you has receding gray hair that forms unruly tufts behind his ears. His eyes squint as if he just awoke. His nightrobe tells of considerable wealth, but it is wrinkled as if just pulled from a heap on the floor. In his hand he holds the iron sconce of a flickering candle.
>
> For a brief moment he stares at you in silence. The unease passes quickly as his eyes widen and he exclaims in a shrill voice, "Oh! Dear me! You've come already!"
>
> In a confused flurry of action, he steps toward you and away, gestures for you to follow, seems ready to flourish and display his home, then thinks better of it. All the while the gentleman welcomes you to his house, ushers you toward the dusty furniture, and lights the oil lamps set about the parlor. Clouds of dust rise in his wake.

Lord Ramsay is perfectly harmless at this point. He apologizes for not tidying up sooner and admits that he has not received many callers since his wife died in a tragic accident. If asked about the accident, the doctor pretends not to hear the question and attempts to change the subject to introductions or other banter. When pressed on the matter, Lord Ramsay concedes, dishonestly, that his wife was taken from him after she fell from the cliffs near the house.

If asked his name, he apologizes profusely for his rudeness and introduces himself as Lord Blake Ramsay, formerly of Mordentshire. If asked how he knew the PCs were coming, he tells them truthfully that he saw their craft from his bedroom window. He knew the PCs would need rooms for the night, so he went about preparing the upstairs bedrooms.

The doctor's giddiness and anxiety are genuine. In the back of his mind he is already considering which visitor might best serve as a donor for his daughter. At some point early in the discussion, the obviously preoccupied doctor stares unabashedly into each PCs' eyes. When he finds an elf or a charismatic female PC, he comments on the beauty of that person's eyes.

Upon meeting Luther (or the NPC the DM has chosen to serve as the doctor's primary target), Ramsay compliments the fellow several times. In Luther's case, such flattery puts the elf somewhat more at ease. After a few minutes, his ego has fed enough that he might defend Lord Ramsay against PCs who take their suspicion of the doctor too far. Luther tells blatantly rude PCs that they are being too hard on a man who has offered them respite and sanctuary. Luther is no fool, but he is clearly predisposed to favor someone who appreciates him.

Lord Ramsay attempts to cut off any arguments with a renewed offer to go upstairs and change into dry clothes. Luther cocks an eyebrow, as if such congeniality proves his argument, and follows the doctor to the second floor.

If any PC questions Lord Ramsay about his wife's demise or approaches the iron woodstove, a foul odor like charred wood wafts through the room. This is the ghost of Helen. Lord Ramsay turns pale and attempts to hurry the PCs upstairs, insisting that the bedrooms are ready and much cleaner than the parlor.

Should a PC attempt to open the woodstove, Helen is quick to use her *portal control* ability to secure it while the stench in the room intensifies. Repeated attempts infuriate Lord Ramsay, who fears his wife might slay the PCs before they can donate their eyes to Liza. He summons the sawflies to attack.

If the PCs manage to open the woodstove doors before Event 8, they merely uncover the charred bones and ashen remains of Lord Ramsay's family.

Should the PCs ever appear ready to attack Lord Ramsay, he attempts to flee to the dining room, activates his *obsidian lion* (see area **2** for details), and runs to his lab (area **4**). The *lion* attacks anyone who tries to follow the good doctor. If Ramsay is "slain," proceed with Event 6.

The statistics for Lord Ramsay and his family are presented in "The Ramsays" sidebar.

Event 3: A Late Dinner

Assuming the PCs follow, Lord Ramsay leads them upstairs to the three guest bedrooms (see area 7). One of these belonged to a manservant who accompanied the Ramsays to the island but died of natural causes soon after the house was built. The other two belonged to Lord Ramsay's sons, Gregory and Blake, Jr. No hint of the boys' presence remains in the house, but any PC sleeping in either boy's room is plagued with nightmares inspired by the boys' ghosts. In these dreams, Lord Ramsay chases the dreamer across a bleak, stormswept landscape, shouting wildly of his plans to dismember his quarry, luridly detailing how he plans to remove the PC's eyes and burn what remains.

Each guest room contains a single bed large enough for two. Lord Ramsay, playing the role of a doting housekeeper, leads the PCs to separate rooms. He tries to get Luther (or his primary target) to sleep alone or with one other character. Luther accepts the offer appreciatively unless the PCs object on his behalf.

Once the PCs are situated in their rooms, Lord Ramsay smiles. He walks from room to room, offering the following statement to each of his guests:

> "Please, feel free to look through the wardrobes and get yourselves out of those wet things. I'm off to the kitchen to prepare a small tray of food for you. I shant be long."
>
> Lord Ramsay hurries out of the room, muttering to himself about cheese and vegetables. You hear his footsteps fading as he scurries downstairs and into the dining room.

Give the PCs about five minutes in game time to change clothes and meet with one another. Blake has hung sets of well-tailored clothing in each wardrobe; these fashions are one hundred years out of date, but only those familiar with present-day Mordentshire would know this.

By now, the PCs probably distrust the doctor, especially if their actions brought about the malodorous manifestation of Helen in the parlor. Such a response is fine; let them share their worries with one another, and then have Blake

Ramsay return with a clanging tray of foodstuffs and two pitchers.

On the tray is enough food for the entire party. The doctor stops in each room, starting with the character or NPC he has chosen as Liza's donor. He offers cuts of cheese and venison from the forest, both smelling delicious and appearing tasty. Remind players that even suspicious PCs are probably very hungry, and their own supplies were most likely lost in the shipwreck. Also, Lord Ramsay is watching like a very concerned host, whom they might not want to upset.

The food is heavily spiced and a bit undercooked, but otherwise quite edible.

Event 4: Abducted!

As the PCs settle in for the night, taking whatever precautions they deem necessary to protect themselves against the unknown, be careful to provide plenty of atmospheric description. The wind whistles outside, rattling loose shutters. Old boards settle. Rats scurry along the walls. Unfortunately for the PCs, this last sound common to the manor is not as identifiable as it appears.

The scratching sound of "scurrying rats" is actually the faint scraping of wings from the doctor's homonculous servant. The homonculous flutters through narrow passages between the rooms (too small even for a gnome), peeking in on the PCs through cracks in the walls. It relays all information to its master via telepathic link.

Once Lord Ramsay is certain that most PCs are asleep, he sends the homonculous into the room to dispatch any guards. The stealthy little creature creeps through a bole in the back corner of the wardrobe and creeps up on anyone awake. The homonculous has a 65% chance to Hide in Shadows and Move Silently for purposes of this endeavor. The homonculous attempts to bite the PC from behind (+4 bonus to attack rolls; no Dexterity or shield modifiers to AC). If this attack is successful, the homonculous bites anyone sleeping in the room, then attacks any guards still awake elsewhere in the manor.

Assuming the homonculous is successful, Ramsay then enters the room of his chosen prey by means of his *shadow door* ability. It is very difficult to rid a room completely of shadows, and the doctor never thinks twice about arriving in the wardrobe or under the bed. If the homonculous failed in its task, the doctor quickly "sedates" his drowsy victim (or a PC guard) using an old sock full of blunt stones; any hit to the head inflicts 1 point of damage and requires the victim to make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or be knocked unconscious. Lord Ramsay's attempt to sap his opponent requires an attack roll with a –4 penalty. (Treat as a called shot to the head.)

If the guards are dispatched quietly, Lord Ramsay turns his attention toward removing the chosen NPC to the new laboratory (area **4**). The doctor is not as strong as he once was, so he is forced to cradle his victim beneath the shoulders and drag him or her down the steps.

The noise of the victim's trailing feet thudding down the steps might well awake PCs. Sleeping PCs may roll a Constitution check. Success indicates that the PC awakens to the noise. If more than one PC awakes, the DM might want to state that a random character awakes to the sound of boards creaking overhead, alluding to the zombies trapped in the attic. (See area **11** for details.)

PCs who investigate the sound of their companion being dragged down the steps need only peer over the second-floor banister to see the doctor:

> Lord Ramsay stands at the base of the staircase. He has just finished dragging his victim to the bottom of the steps and is turning the corner into the dining room. The balcony floorboards creak under your weight, and the doctor looks up.
>
> The light of madness shines in his eyes as he shakes his fist at you and cries, "Damn you! I just want the eyes!"

Ordering the homonculous to attack, Lord Ramsay flees to the dining room (area **2**), abandoning his victim for the moment, if necessary, to reach the curio. PCs chasing after him enter melee range and should roll initiative immediately. If the doctor reaches the curio, read or paraphrase the following:

> Lord Ramsay tugs open the glass door of the curio and removes a smooth figurine. Turning, he hurls it blindly toward you. As the figurine strikes the floor, it changes into a mighty, black-maned lion.

Ramsay tries to use the chaos created by the *obsidian lion* to drag the chosen NPC to area **5**, and from there down the cellar steps. Failing that, he flees to the new laboratory (area **4**), grabs a scalpel from the tray, and fights "to the death." (The scalpel inflicts 1–2 points of damage per hit.) If "slain," the doctor perpetuates this illusion for as long as is convenient, studying the PCs quietly. Should Lord Ramsay overhear Liza telling the PCs about the iron key in area **10**, he immediately uses his *shadow door* ability to retrieve it. Otherwise, there is a 40% chance per subsequent event that the doctor goes to his bedroom and removes the key "for safekeeping." He feels much safer knowing the precious item is on his person.

Should no PCs awaken to the sound of Lord Ramsay's abduction, the chosen NPC is slain within the hour, his cerebral fluids taken via Lord Ramsay's *intellect syringe*, his eyes transplanted into Liza and ultimately corrupted, and his body added to the unholy host in the attic. When the party awakes, night still darkens the sky, and the doctor inquires as to what happened to their friend.

As the hours pass by, the doctor becomes more and more edgy as he suspects the PCs plan to leave his home. Trying to leave leads to the events detailed under Event 7. Of course, PCs foolish enough to spend another night in the house can expect to have another friend vanish under the same mysterious circumstances.

Homonculous (1): AC 6; MV 6, fly 18 (B); HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SA bite causes sleep for 5d6 rounds; SZ T; ML 16; INT genius (17); AL CE; XP 120; *MM*/192; small *bag of holding*.

If Lord Ramsay is "slain," the homonculous is not destroyed; instead, it is struck by a *confusion* spell for one round until Lord Ramsay "reforms." If the homonculous is killed, it is forever destroyed, and Lord Ramsay falls over as if slain. So long as the family curse

remains unbroken, the doctor recovers after 1 round. Even if the PCs completely destroy Lord Ramsay's body, it reforms and reappears elsewhere in the house; see "The Ramsays" sidebar for details.

Event 5: Meeting Liza

After the botched abduction of the chosen NPC and the "death" and subsequent disappearance of Lord Ramsay, any PCs still sleeping in the guest rooms awaken from their nightmarish slumber.

What follows is probably a search of the premises. Some PCs might want to find the man who tried to kill their companion. Others might be interested in treasure hunting. More pragmatic PCs might seek a way to escape the isle. At some point, the PCs' search should lead to the cellar. Read or paraphrase the following description the first time the door to the cellar (in area **5**) is opened:

> Looking through the shadowy doorway, you inhale the musty air of a basement mingled with the cloying scent of rotting meat. The light of a single lantern burns below. In the silence following the screeching hinges, the cries of a young girl can be heard.

As PCs continue into the cellar, proceed with the description of area **12**. The sound of crying is clearly issuing from beyond the iron door leading to area **13**.

If the PCs try speaking through the keyhole, they find that Liza can hear them and respond. Amid her broken sobs, she begs them to unlock the door and free her from the "scary room." She knows that her father keeps the key to the door in a strongbox in his bedroom (area **10**).

Liza reveals her (apparent) age and describes the devices in the lab around her from a child's frightened perspective. Liza is clearly a little girl frightened of her prison. If the PCs need to find the key, proceed with Event 6; if the PCs have the key and unlock the door, proceed with Event 8.

Event 6: Finding the Iron Key

After speaking with Liza, the PCs might want to rescue the little girl. To keep PCs out of area **13**, Lord Ramsay takes the iron key from area **10** and keeps it on his person. Killing Lord Ramsay causes his body (and the iron key) to vanish into shadow. If the PCs capture Lord Ramsay rather than kill him, they can remove the key from his person. In the meantime, Lord Ramsay does his best to escape. He can summon rats to chew discreetly through his bonds or command the demonic sawflies in area **1** to distract the PCs long enough for him to leap into a patch of shadow.

Once he has the iron key, Lord Ramsay tries his best to hide from the PCs (while never leaving the manor). If the PCs have not yet encountered the Ramsay ghosts in the hedgerow, an invitation is extended at this time. As the PCs leave the cellar and enter area **4**, read or paraphrase the following description:

> As you leave the cellar, the back door blows open. A path leads into the tall, thorny hedgerow behind the house. In the distance, faint moonlight peeks through the clouds, illuminating a large topiary, although you cannot determine its exact shape.
>
> You hear something chilling from within the hedgerow—the soft laughter of a little boy.

Proceed with the description of area **6** if the PCs enter the hedgerow.

If the PCs ignore the hedgerow or survive the harrowing encounters therein, they should eventually return to the house.

When the PCs next enter the parlor (area **1**), they find that the number of flies buzzing about the room has increased drastically. At the behest of Lord Ramsay, the two demonic sawflies dwelling in the parlor have summoned swarms of gnats and flies. The swarms make spellcasting in the parlor impossible and inflict 2–5

Lord Ramsay's homonculous patiently stalks its next victim.

points of damage to any character trying to cast spells or perform some hostile action. PCs who spend a full round swatting the insects suffer only 1 point of damage. While the PCs contend with these mundane insects, the sawflies grow to their full six-foot height and attack anyone trying to climb the stairs.

Techniques of Horror

While they search the house, feel free to drop in tidbits of horror and paranoia to keep the PCs from focusing entirely on the mystery set before them. Some possible "tidbits" include:

- While the PCs are distracted (either battling one of the manor's denizens or listening to the sound of zombies clambering in the attic), the sound of a little boy's giggling and scampering footsteps echo from the direction of the master bedroom (area **10**).
- If the PCs insult the Ramsay family or do something to anger Helen or the boys, Lady Ramsay retaliates for the insult by opening all of the manor doors, then slamming them abruptly one after another. This is followed by a wave of heat and the strong odor of woodsmoke.
- The window on the second floor landing is open, and a chill breeze is making the house uncomfortably cold. Helen has chosen to discomfort the PCs by using her *portal control* ability to keep the window from closing. The window resists being shut as if affected by magic of 12th level. At the DM's option, the window could either slam shut the round after a character tries to force it closed, or it could remain open to slam down on someone trying to escape the conflagration during the Nightstorm (see Event 8) for 2d4 points of damage.
- A randomly chosen PC is overcome with claustrophobia and nyctophobia. For a moment, the character falls to his knees, completely enrapt in the sensation. After a few seconds it passes, leaving the PC with a burning desire to find the iron key and free Liza from her imprisonment. A successful saving throw vs. spell allows the PC to resist the urge. The urge does not go away, however, and saving throws must continue each turn until the cellar door is opened.

Event 7: The Madman Strikes

This encounter assumes that the PCs have not obtained the iron key and have angered Lord Ramsay by intruding upon the master bedroom. By now, the PCs should have some clues to the nature of the curse on the Ramsay family. They might not know what releasing Liza will accomplish, but they probably know that breaking the curse is somehow keyed to just that event.

Thwarting Lord Ramsay's experiments and rooting through his belongings is too much for the mad doctor to bear. Lord Ramsay confronts the PCs with his pistol cocked and loaded. He tries to confront the PCs on the second floor—if not in the master bedroom, than certainly the upstairs hallway. Any PCs still searching for the iron key can see it hanging from the doctor's belt.

As the doctor takes his first shot, the zombies in the attic begin crashing through the ceiling, attacking PCs at the end of the next round. The zombies drop at the rate of two per round.

After firing his pistol, Lord Ramsay charges into melee without regard for his own safety, his rage granting him a +2 bonus to attacks and worsening his AC by 2. If felled, he rises again in 1 round. Should he find the room empty and the iron key missing upon regaining consciousness, he charges to the cellar, where he is sure he will find the PCs.

Event 8: The Nightstorm

When the dark powers cursed the Ramsays, the iron key's magic was subtly altered. Now, it not only provides entrance to the old laboratory (and the means to freeing Liza) but also, in the hands of anyone but Lord Ramsay, sets off a chain reaction of magic and nature known as the Nightstorm.

The Nightstorm begins when the door to area **13** is opened and Liza is released. (See "Liza Unleashed!" below.) Lord Ramsay and the living webs in area **12** do their utmost to keep the PCs from unlocking the door to area **13**. So long as Liza remains trapped, the Nightstorm does not manifest.

Round 1: Thunder rolls through the sky as the storm that has been brewing for close to a century prepares to unleash its fury. Winds begin to gust, making the old rafters groan and the window panes rattle. Chill breezes cut through the aged walls of the house.

Round 2: The storm abruptly sweeps over the island. Rain hammers against the roof tiles and tears shutters from the windows. At the end of the round, several windows shatter, pelting the PCs with shards of glass and driving rain. The storm inflicts no damage but imposes a +2 initiative penalty to all corporeal beings in the house on this round and all subsequent rounds.

Round 3: Lightning strikes the house. The dry boards erupt like kindling, engulfing the attic in flames. Any surviving zombies clamber downstairs, along with the scarab beetle swarm if the PCs have not yet dealt with it. By the end of the round, smoke fills the second story as the storm fans the flames.

Anyone in the parlor when the lightning strikes sees the heretofore-sealed woodstove doors burst open. A blazing inferno fills the stove, and tormented screams can be heard from within. From the depths of the fire (which seems to reach well beyond the recesses of the stove), shadowy forms claw their way toward release.

Round 4: Any PCs remaining on the smoke-filled second floor must make a successful Constitution check to stay conscious. Every round hereafter, PCs must continue to roll checks with a cumulative –2 penalty per round. Any PC who fails a check falls unconscious and dies of smoke inhalation in 3–6 rounds until rescued and taken to a place with fresh air.

Round 5: Assuming it has not been destroyed, the living hair bursts from the sewing room (area **8**) and makes a mad dash for the front door. It lopes indiscriminately into zombies and PCs alike, attacking anything that bars its escape.

Fire consumes the second floor of the manor. Unprotected PCs or creatures on this level suffer 2d6 points of damage per round. PCs and other breathing creatures must make a Constitution check each round to avoid the effects of smoke inhalation (see above).

Rounds 6–8: The fires spread to the ground floor, consuming the entire house at the end of **Round 8**.

The Ramsays

Blake Ramsay, 0-level male human: AC 8; MV 12; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–2 (scalpel) or 1–8 (snaplock pistol); SD *shadow door*, invulnerability; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 12; ML 18; AL CE; XP 120.

Due to the powerful curse that the doctor has brought onto his family, he can be killed only if flames engulf his entire family at once. Any blow that would indicate death merely places him in a deathlike state for 1 round, from which he awakens fully rejuvenated and aware. Lord Ramsay also has a control over the unnatural creatures of his isle, including the demonic sawflies, death linen, living webs, and zombies. He can also cast *shadow door* at will, vanishing into one shadow and emerging from another, but only within the confines of the manor.

If captured, Lord Ramsay does his best to reach a patch of shadow and escape. Upon using his *shadow door* ability, any ropes or bonds used to ensnare him fall harmlessly to the floor.

Lord Ramsay cannot leave the manor. If forcibly removed from the premises, he fades away and reappears somewhere inside the house. Likewise, If his body is destroyed utterly, Ramsay "reforms" after 1 round, reappearing somewhere inside the house.

If asked the time, Ramsay states that the clock in the dining room stopped working long ago. He has no recollection of when he last saw the sun.

Helen, Gregory, and **Blake, Jr.** (second magnitude, mutable, preserved ghosts anchored to their home): AC 6; MV 6, fly 24 (A); HD 4; hp 21 (Helen), 16 (the boys); THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA *ventriloquism* (Helen only), *portal control* (Helen only), mutable form, flight; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; immune to *sleep, charm, hold, fear,* poison, paralysis, death magic, and cold-based attacks; ML 20; AL CE; XP 2,000 (Helen); 1,400 (the boys).

All three ghosts retain the heat of the fires that consumed their bodies, and their burning touch inflicts painful wounds. Helen's touch is more fearsome than that of the boys, inflicting 3d6 points of damage per successful hit. The boys' touch inflicts 1d6 points of damage per hit. By slipping into the Border Ethereal, these ghosts enjoy an innate *invisibility* power, but they must manifest to attack. If slain, they return at full strength in one turn so long as the curse remains unbroken.

Helen's special *portal control* ability allows her to effectively lock any door, window, cabinet, or other portal, either in an open or shut position. The spell otherwise mimics the spell *wizard lock*, as if cast by a 12th-level mage.

Helen and the boys exist to torment Lord Ramsay for his crimes. They appear charred and eyeless, clad in the nightclothes in which they were burned. Aside from a malformed face and hunched back, Gregory's right arm was crudely amputated for his sister, as was Blake Jr.'s right leg.

Liza Ramsay (flesh golem): AC 6; MV 12; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/2d4; SA strangulation; SD spell immunity, +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ S; ML 20; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 5,000; *RAVENLOFT MCA3/47*. Liza is smaller than most RAVENLOFT flesh golems and inflicts less damage. If Liza hits with both fists in the same round, she can strangle her opponent on successive rounds for 3d4 points of damage per round. Liza is immune to cold and lightning, and she is unaffected by spells that do not deal damage directly.

Liza is dressed as a young lady, wearing a fine period dress with lacy frills, white gloves, and stockings. Though shaved bald, a convincing raven-hued wig covers the rude scars from the surgery that gave her "life."

Liza Ramsay is the focal point of the curse on the Ramsay family. While her father muttered to himself and stitched her broken form back together, he made an unwitting pact with the dark powers. In exchange for a mockery of life, the entire family was cast into a nighttime realm of undeath.

Liza Unleashed!

When the PCs reach the cellar with the key, Liza cries out for mercy from beyond the sealed door. If the PCs open the door to area **13**, read or paraphrase the following:

> The iron key turns in the lock and the door swings open of its own volition. Squealing with glee, a girl of no more than twelve years rushes out, arms extended, tears streaming from her shut eyes. Emaciated and pale, she collapses in your arms.

If Lord Ramsay is in the cellar at this point, he uses his *shadow door* ability to flee the instant Liza is freed.

Liza refuses to open her eyes until she is carried to the top of the steps. She allows a PC to carry her from the cellar if one is willing. As the house shudders and burns, the quickest escape seems to be through the back door into the hedgerow (area **6**), where astute PCs notice that the griffon topiary is missing.

Lord Ramsay is unable to flee the burning house. As the PCs carry Liza from the manor, regardless of the exit used, read or paraphrase the following:

> A terrible cry issues from the burning, storm-wracked manor. The tortured scream is unmistakably that of Lord Ramsay. Young Liza's eyes open wide, and you recoil unconsciously. In place of pupils, the girl has only iridescent green orbs! Her lips curl into a grimace not meant for any human face, and she snarls, "Father!"

The curse that has beset the Ramsay family ends when the entire family is consumed by fire. (Liza and Blake Ramsay are the only remaining family members who have so far escaped this fate.) Displaying her true strength, Liza attempts to fling aside anyone who stands in her way as she rushes into the flames to seek vengeance upon her father. Liza does not allow PCs to keep her from reaching her family and breaking the curse, attacking anyone who stands in her way.

The most likely conclusion for this adventure is detailed below under Event 9. PC actions could result in different endings for this adventure. The DM is encouraged to improvise and tailor the conclusion as circumstances dictate.

Event 9: The Clock Strikes Twelve

This event assumes that the PCs have rescued Liza from Lord Ramsay's laboratory and set into motion the fateful Nightstorm (as described in Event 8). It also assumes that Liza has fled into the burning house to confront her father. Read or paraphrase the following text at this time:

> You stand a good distance from Lord Ramsay's home, the driving rain stinging your flesh. A halo of flame rises above the blackened edifice, drawing your eyes to the roiling clouds churning in the sky overhead. When you peer into the embrous wreckage of the old house, you see the doctor himself stagger into view through the smoke-filled doorframe.
>
> Three barely substantial forms flit about him as young Liza appears from behind to drag her father to the ground. Even from here you can see a perverse smile below her wide, glowing green eyes. From deep within the house come the twelve chimes of a grandfather clock. Again and again the chimes sound, bringing midnight to the island at long last. Suddenly, a gout of flame from within the collapsing house immolates the doctor. His ashes vanish behind curtains of driving rain.
>
> A piercing squawk penetrates the tolling clock and thunderous cauldron of the storm-wrought sky. Descending from the bleak clouds is a giant griffon. It alights gracefully on the rain-soaked grass and glares at you before lowering its wings in an apparent offer to take you to safety!

The topiary griffon that once stood in the hedgerow (area **6**) has transformed into a living griffon. The griffon is large enough to carry the entire party, growing from its original size if need be. Any PC who climbs onto its back is carried to the city of Mordentshire. Once its passengers are safely delivered, the magnificent creature flies off, vanishing on the horizon as the sun rises.

If for some reason the PCs do not accept the griffon's offer, they must outlast the storm and await a boat. With the curse lifted, a ship should pass by the island within the month.

Griffon: AC 3; MV 12, fly 30 (C, D if mounted); HD 7; hp 55; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1–4/1–4/2–16; SZ L; ML 12; INT semi (4); AL N; XP 650; *MM*/178.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Once the PCs leave the isle, they find the Lands of the Mists awaiting their return. Surely events have been taking place in their absence. If no adventure immediately awaits them, perhaps they remember rumors they overheard concerning Markovia and Dominia. Of course, their ordeal in the home of Lord Ramsay may have left them with little desire to enter such a situation again. PCs who leave the isle by means other than the griffon "topiary" need to make some sort of deal with the captain of whatever ship happens upon them. A note to remember when planning this encounter: Most good-natured sea captains do not spend their time trolling the Sea of Sorrows!

PCs who escape the isle after breaking the Ramsays' curse deserve an experience award for their accomplishment. A generous DM could divide the 9,800 XP value of the ghosts and golem among surviving PCs, though a smaller amount may be desired to preserve campaign balance. Each character in the party should earn no less than 1,000 XP for breaking the curse on the isle and surviving to tell the tale. Ω

Nodwick
www.nodwick.com
by Aaron Williams
YOU ARE ONE TWISTED SICKSTER, LORD RAMSAY!
I NEED MY DAUGHTER BACK!
I'M SORRY THAT YOUR DAUGHTER DIED, BUT YOU'VE BROUGHT DISASTER UPON YOUR HOUSE! YOU HAVE TO ACCEPT DEATH! YOU CAN'T JUST COLLECT THE PIECES THAT USED TO BE A PERSON AND PUT THEM BACK TOGETHER! IT'S UNNATURAL!
UH--
IT'S HORRIFYING! IT'S CRUEL! IT'S--
IT'S WHAT YOU GUYS DO TO ME ON A DAILY BASIS!
OOPSIE! MORAL DILEMMA!
YEAH, BUT HE'S USED TO IT, RIGHT?

Death Linen, Sheet

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any (mostly indoors)
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any (mostly night)
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8–10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	9
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	6
THAC0:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1–4/1–4/1–2
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison, suffocation
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Elite (13–14)
XP VALUE:	1,400

"What he chiefly remembers about it is a horrible, an intensely horrible, face of crumpled linen. With formidable quickness it moved into the middle of the room, and, as it groped and waved, one corner of its draperies swept across Parkins's face."
—"Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad," M. R. James

When lying in bed at night, wondering what those strange creeks and pops are in the darkness, who hasn't felt just a little more secure by drawing up the covers? Even the security of bedclothes is taken from us by death linens.

Death linens are beings of living cloth, usually sheets, pillows, and other items associated with beds. They have been infected with latent psychic forces born of nightmares. They are normally active at night, but they can lurk in cupboards or laundries and assault people at any time. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

The sheet variety of the death linen takes on a disturbingly humanoid form when it strikes, moving at a surprisingly swift pace, and it gyrates and flops as it moves, a most disturbing spectacle. Anyone seeing a sheet must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or flee in terror for 2–8 rounds. (In the RAVENLOFT campaign setting, use a fear check instead.) Sheets normally reside indoors, but they think nothing of chasing prey across the countryside.

Combat: The sheet strikes twice in combat with its ragged fists for 1–4 points of damage each. It can suffocate if it hits with an 18 or better. A successful Strength check is needed to free oneself from the sheet. It can also bite for 1–2 points of damage, and its fangs are poisonous (Type C; onset time 2–5 minutes; Dmg 25/2–8).

Blunt weapons inflict only 1 point of damage (plus any magical weapon and Strength bonuses) to a sheet per successful hit. Death linens are not undead and cannot be turned by priests or harmed by holy water.

Fire causes double damage to them. A gallon or more of water sloshed on a sheet affects it as the *slow* spell. If a character strikes it with a roll of 19 or 20, the creature is stunned for one round, and it flops to the floor in an inert pile. Any attacks made in the following round automatically hit.

Even after it is reduced to 0 hit points, a sheet's life force might enter another sheet in the next 1–12 months—a noncumulative 10% chance per month. After all, we all sleep, and we often have nightmares, which strengthen the strange beings. If a slain death linen does not reappear within one year, the life-force forever dissipates.

Habitat/Society: Sheets are apt to roam the countryside for prey, but they find greater comfort in houses, castles, and manors. They need no nourishment; they assault or avoid living creatures for reasons known only to themselves. They rarely tolerate the presence of others of their kind.

Ecology: Like other varieties of death linen, the sheet holds no place in the natural order. Certain magical items have been created to control such beings, especially whistles inscribed with magical runes. Bits of them can be used in rites to create zombies and other undead beings.

Demonic Sawfly

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Swarm
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Blood
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi- (2–4)
TREASURE:	J, K, L
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1–6
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	12, Fly 12 (B)
HIT DICE:	2
THAC0:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1–4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Blood drain, insect swarm
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Shrinking
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5–6' long)
MORALE:	Steady (11–12)
XP VALUE:	175

"... there was—I don't know how to put it—a sensation of long thin arms, or legs, or feelers, all about my face, and neck, and body ... I tore at the curtain and somehow let in enough light to be able to see something waving which I knew was an insect's leg, by the shape of it: but, Lord, what a size! Why, the beast must have been as tall as I am."

—"The Residence at Whitminster," M. R. James

These creatures were let into the world accidentally by foolish practitioners of black magic. They resemble reddish-brown daddy longlegs with wings, and they can stand upright on their spindly limbs (giving them a height of 5 or 6 feet).

Combat: A sawfly bites for 1–4 points of damage, and on the following round it causes 1–4 points of damage automatically due to blood drainage. Afterward it attempts to bite again. Once per day a sawfly can summon a swarm of gnats and flies to assault its enemies (the equivalent of a *summon swarm* spell).

A sawfly can shrink at will to the size of an ordinary insect. If a sawfly loses more than 50% of its hit points, it shrinks automatically. If any normal gnats or flies are in the area, it mingles with them and becomes nearly impossible to spot. Searchers can detect them by making a successful Intelligence check on 1d100. In its diminutive state, the sawfly can dodge any attack if it makes a successful saving throw vs. wands. However, any successful hit crushes it. It cannot attack in small form.

Habitat/Society: Demonic sawflies instinctively desire to swarm with others of their kind, but such swarms are rare on the Prime Material Plane. Unlike most insects, the females lay merely one or two eggs per year, so only a handful of sawflies are found in any one area. To make up for this low population density, sawflies join normal swarms of gnats and flies and follow them on their rounds. They need blood to survive, however, so they will abandon their adopted swarms to feed.

Sawflies live longer than most insects, up to fifty years. They go into hibernation in times of need, and they can survive in this condition for as long as one century. The passage of any warm-blooded creature within 20 feet of a hibernating sawfly awakens it, and the insect attacks ravenously.

Since demonic sawflies lay eggs infrequently, they guard their broods jealously. Sawfly eggs can be found hidden in out-of-the-way nooks and crannies of buildings, castles, and other relatively dry shelters. A sawfly defending its eggs gains a +2 bonus on all attacks and saving throws.

Ecology: Demonic sawflies might have been parasites on the monstrous inhabitants of another plane, as mosquitoes and fleas are parasites on the Prime Material Plane. Due to their shrinking ability, sawflies infiltrate castles and houses as easily as ordinary insects. They are smart enough to realize that some cunning is needed to attack humans and other intelligent creatures. They often hide in cupboards, closets, or cabinets, ready to spring out on unsuspecting victims. Such hiding places might contain a small amount of treasure.

The blood and eggs of a demonic sawfly can be used in *enlarge* or *reduce* spells or potions. Its wings, ground up, can be used as components of spells such as *summon swarm*.

Living Hair

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Darkness, night
DIET:	Hair, fur
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8–10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	5
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1–6/1–6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Strangulation
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	50%
SIZE:	M (5–6' tall)
MORALE:	Champion (15–16)
XP VALUE:	975

"It was in the attitude of one that had crept along the floor on its belly, and it was, so far as could be recollected, a human figure. But of the face which was now rising to within a few inches of his own no feature was discernible, only hair."

—"The Diary of Mr. Poynter," M. R. James

A person who is extremely vain concerning the appearance of his hair can create a living hair creature. Such a person must use strands of his own hair as material in the creation of a curtain or rug, and the rug must contain certain magic sigils as part of the design.

Sages suggest that the old folk tales about corpses growing hair after death, sometimes enough to fill the coffin, are actually accounts of living hair forming spontaneously. Once having grown in the womb of the grave, living hair can trickle out through the merest cracks and reach the surface world.

Combat: Living hair appears as a humanoid mass of matted hair. It can break up into individual fibers and pass through cracks and under doors, but it requires 2–8 rounds to reform its manlike shape, so it tries to hide in a dark corner or nook until ready to strike. It can Move Silently (90%), Hide in Shadows (80%), Detect Noises (50%), and Climb Walls (95%).

In battle, living hair strikes with its two shapeless fists. If discovered before it has fully formed, it can fight but causes only 1 point of damage per blow on the first round, 1–2 points on the second, 1–3 on the third, and 1–4 on the fourth before finally reaching its full strength of 1–6 points of damage per blow.

If living hair strikes with an attack roll of 18 or higher, it begins strangling the victim for an automatic 2–8 points of damage per round. This is not simply a matter of seizing the victim by the neck—wads of hair actually enter the nostrils and windpipe! The victim—or other characters—must make a successful Strength check on 1d20 to yank the monster loose, foregoing any other attacks that round.

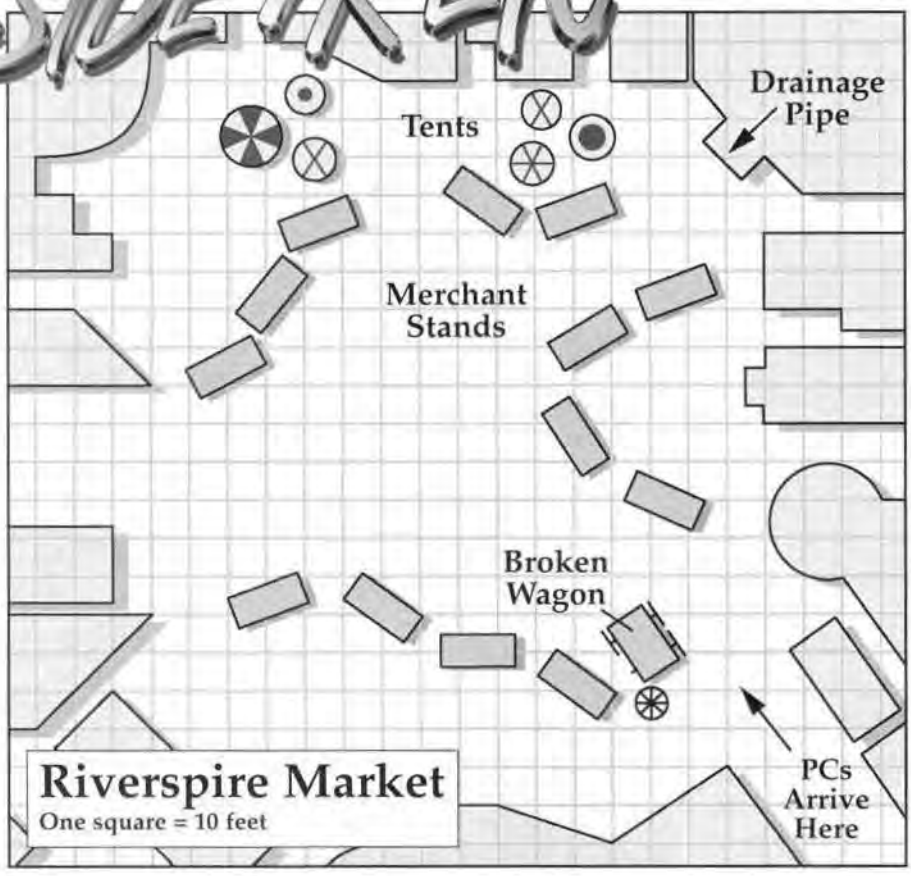
Living hair regenerates 2 points of damage per round. Blunt weapons cause only half damage, but fire-based attacks inflict double damage to the creature. Even if killed, living hair grows back in 2–20 days unless every strand of hair is destroyed. Living hair is not considered undead and cannot be turned by priests or harmed with holy water.

Habitat/Society: These monsters are loners, mostly due to their rarity but also because they carry a residue of vanity from the humans or demihumans who gave them birth. This vanity has soured into a general hatred of all humanoid races, and they actively try to destroy characters with higher than average Charisma. They inhabit artificial structures like castles, manors, and dungeons—another memory of their "parents."

Ecology: Although not natural beings, living hair creatures have stepped into an almost untapped ecological niche: They can utilize cast-off hair and fur in their bodies, materials that most creatures find difficult to digest.

Bits of living hair are used by wizards in the creation of magical ropes, such as those of *climbing* and *constriction*, and *nets of entanglement*.

SIDE TREKS



BY KEVIN CARTER

Cartography by Renee Ciske

"A Day at the Market" is an AD&D® Side Trek for 3–5 good-aligned PCs of levels 2–4 (about 12 total levels). Because the adventure takes place in the market of a generic town called Riverspire, this module can be adapted easily to fit into any campaign world.

Adventure Background

The Duke of Riverspire's fortieth birthday is days away. The duke's advisor, an accident-prone mage named Morrigan, had planned a special treat for the upcoming celebration to atone for his latest blunder (an explosion in the duke's alchemy lab). Using a modified version of the *light* spell along with *pyrotechnics* and *flaming sphere* spells, Morrigan hoped to perform a spectacular firework show that would put him back in the duke's favor. Unfortunately, the mage was unable to cultivate enough of the phosphorescent moss (the material component of the *light* spell) for his firework show. Undeterred, the crafty mage explored the sewers of Riverspire looking for the phosphorescent moss that grows on the subterranean walls. Then he had another accident.

While navigating through the bowels of the city, he encountered a gray ooze that attacked from the shadows. The ooze, which feeds on metal, devoured Morrigan's *wand of wonder* in the ensuing melee, and the *wand*'s magic flowed into the gray ooze in a spectacular, multicolored explosion. Engorged with magical energy, the ooze began to randomly belch forth the consumed *wand of wonder*'s magic. To Morrigan's horror, the ooze's first magical expulsion summoned a rhinoceros (effect 34–36 of the *wand of wonder*, as given in the *DMG*), which charged down the narrow, muddy tunnel. Morrigan panicked and fled toward the nearest drainage grate 50 yards away, the two-ton rhinoceros on his tail. Unfortunately, the drainage pipe opens into Riverspire's bustling market where the player characters are going about their business.

Havoc in the Market

The PCs can be in the market square for whatever reasons the DM desires. When they arrive, read or paraphrase the following description:

> You stroll through the bustling town square. Weaving through the chaotic crowd, you pass many booths that proudly display various merchandise and oddities. The air is brimming with smells, from the salty odor of the fishmonger's salmon to the sweet aroma of the baker's pastries. To your left a dark-haired, middle-aged man struggles with a broken wagon axle as a nearby merchant yells angrily that the broken cart is blocking his booth. Two small children dart in front of you, giggling noisily as their game of tag continues through the congested street. About twenty yards ahead, a thick crowd pushes and shoves to get a better view of three juggling street performers.
>
> Suddenly, through the din of the market square, you hear a booming voice reverberate off the surrounding city walls. The source of the voice is a small, frazzle-haired man wearing muddy blue robes. He is trying to squeeze himself through the rusted bars of a grate blocking off a large drainage pipe that siphons the excess rainwater out of the city's grungy sewer system. *"Run for your lives! It's got my wand!"* he yells.
>
> Just as the frantic man throws himself away from the mouth of the sewer entrance, the iron grate is ripped from its bolted frame and flung in a neat arc over a cluster of tents.
>
> From out of the darkness of the sewer passage comes a huge, panicked rhinoceros. Its powerful legs fling mud in every direction as the beast charges, horn lowered, into the market place.

A DAY AT THE MARKET

Morrigan's unnaturally loud voice is the result of an *audible glamer* spell, which he cast while squeezing through the grate. The rhinoceros begins its rampage about 50 yards from the PCs. It overturns carts and smashes through merchant displays to escape from the chaos of the crowd. The PCs should roll for surprise with normal modifiers. The DM should keep in mind that the rhino was summoned from its native element into a heavily populated city. The rhino is only acting instinctively, and any damage it causes is the result of its attempt to escape.

Rhinoceros: AC 6; MV 12; HD 8; hp 41; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA charge inflicts double damage, trample for 2–8/2–8; SZ L; ML 7; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 975; *MCA2/84*.

Morrigan, male human W4: AC 10; MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 8, Dex 9, Con 8, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 11; SZ M; ML 12; AL NG.

Spells (3/2): 1st—*audible glamer*, grease, message, unseen servant;* 2nd—*forget, pyrotechnics**. Spells marked with an asterisk have already been cast.

The PCs are free to take whatever actions they want at this point; however, the crowd has dissolved into outright chaos, further complicating the situation. Movement in the market square should be halved, and a –2 penalty applies to all ranged attack rolls.

Four rounds after the rhino breaks free, the crowd clears and the ranged attack penalty no longer applies.

Should the PCs think to use any equipment left behind by the fleeing merchants, they can find just about anything listed in the *Player's Handbook* in 1–4 rounds, depending on the items' rarity. For example, a rope or net could be found in 1 round, while a mancatcher might take 4 rounds to locate. Keep in mind, however, that while the PCs search for equipment, the rhino is wreaking havoc in the town square.

PCs could subdue the rhino without killing it. The rhino fights to the death if attacked, and trying to beat the beast into submission only enrages it further. A ranger may attempt to calm the rhino using his animal empathy skill with normal chances of success. Snaring the rhino with a rope or net requires a successful called shot. Bringing down the rhino requires a successful overbearing attempt. (See the Combat chapter in the *DMG* for rules on overbearing.) The rhino is difficult to pin down and has the equivalent of 19 Strength.

The broken wagon at the southern end of the market makes an excellent tether for the PCs' lassos should they try to rope down the rhino. Noncombative magic such as *hypnotic pattern* or *color spray* spells are also useful for subduing the rhino. (In the case of *color spray* and similarly blinding spells, the rhino remains inactive the first round of its blindness, then lashes out in a blind frenzy, suffering a –4 attack penalty.)

Once the PCs have had 2 rounds to react to the rhinoceros, read or paraphrase the following:

> From inside the jet-black orifice of the sewer pipe you hear what sounds like a heavy rainstorm. The thin trickle of water that was dripping out of the pipe's mouth has quickly turned into a gushing stream. Carried by the deluge, an incandescent blob flops out of the sewer and onto the earthen ground. The blob writhes slowly before forming into a five-foot-tall mass that resembles a coiled cobra poised for attack.

The gray ooze was sliding away to finish digesting its meal when it belched forth more of the *wand*'s magic. This time a rainstorm is created (result 31–33) that washes the hapless ooze out into the city square. At this point, Morrigan yells, "There's the nasty! It ate my wand! Get it!" As soon as Morrigan finishes speaking, the ooze expels another burst of magic. From this point on, the DM should roll randomly every round to determine what magic the gray ooze unleashes. The DM needs to remember that the ooze and rhino are two separate threats; they are both animals acting on instinct and do not purposefully oppose or cooperate with one another.

One to four rounds after the rhino emerges from the sewer, two city guards arrive. Unfortunately, the guards are ill-equipped to deal with the situation. They hold back until reinforcements arrive (6 rounds after the first guards appear). The guards assist the PCs any way they can but are too afraid to confront the rhino directly; they are useful for clearing out

Sequence of Events

To simplify the flow of events and to help this adventure run smoothly, the DM can refer to the following timeline.

Round 1: Morrigan escapes from the drainpipe and casts *audible glamer*. The rhino charges into the market place.
Rounds 2–5: Two city guards arrive from the west.
Round 3: The gray ooze flops out of the pipe and begins randomly discharging its magical energy while hunting for food.
Round 4: With the exception of a few stragglers, the crowd has cleared. Movement is no longer halved, and PCs suffer no penalties to ranged attacks.
Round 8: Ten city guards arrive as reinforcements.
Round 10: If the gray ooze is still alive, it finds another entrance to the sewer and slides away under the market place, belching magic all the while. The PCs are free to pursue, although the ooze no longer poses a serious threat to the market.

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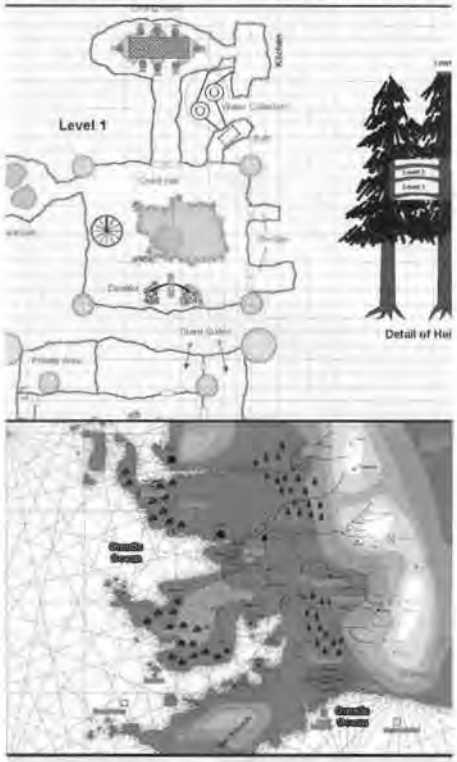

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The Gray Ooze

The gray ooze has been imbued with the magic of Morrigan's *wand of wonder*. However, unlike the *wand*, the ooze cannot contain the unpredictable magic. The gray ooze emits its infused magical energy in much the same way that humans expel excess air in their stomachs: by burping. Indeed, if the DM wants to put a comical slant on the adventure, the ooze can emit a belching noise every time it unleashes a burst of magic.

Gray ooze (modified): AC 8; MV 1; HD 3+3; hp 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–16; SA corrodes metal, magical belching; SD immune to all spells, fire, and cold; SZ M; ML 10; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/278.

A magical "belch" is roughly the equivalent of expending a charge from a *wand of wonder* (see *DMG*). However, there are two differences between the ooze's belching and the use of a *wand of wonder*. First, the ooze expels magic uncontrollably and unconsciously once each round. The ooze is free to perform other actions during the round; its magical belching does not count as an action. That said, the DM should roll a separate, unmodified initiative die at the beginning of each round to determine when the ooze "belches." Second, the ooze does not designate targets as does the user of a *wand of wonder*. The DM should determine appropriate targets after the effect has been randomly determined. Since some of the ooze's belches can be very deadly, the DM should pick targets not to destroy the PCs but to elevate tension. For example, since it's hardly fair for a DM to throw a ten-dice *lightning bolt* at a 2nd-level PC, the *lightning bolt* could vaporize a rope the PC just used to lasso the rhino or destroy a merchant's stand the PCs were using for cover.

When determining how the gray ooze is affected by its own magical expulsions, the DM should remember that gray oozes are immune to all spells save lightning-based attacks.

At the time the *wand* was consumed, it had 22 charges remaining; therefore, the ooze stops its magical belching 21 rounds after the rhino charges out of the sewer.

the square and seeing that citizens are escorted out of harm's way.

City guards, human males F1: AC 5; MV 9; hp 8 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (9); AL LG; chainmail, bill-guisarme (50%) or longsword (50%).

Concluding the Adventure

If Morrigan is alive by the end of the adventure, he explains to the PCs what happened in the sewer. If Morrigan dies, the PCs must unravel the bizarre mystery on their own. Morrigan might be exiled from Riverspire as a result of his actions. The newly unemployed mage could try to join the PCs, further plaguing them with accidents caused by his own good intentions.

The PCs should each receive a 300 XP award for successfully protecting Riverspire's populace. The amount can be modified depending on how the goal was accomplished and the amount of destruction the PCs' actions diverted. If the rhinoceros is subdued without being killed, a special quest might be required to return the beast to its native habitat.

The undoing of the ooze's magical "belches" can lead to many future adventures. For example, a PC or an important NPC might have been turned to stone by a random *wand* effect, requiring the PCs to find a way to cure him or her. Should the ooze manage to escape back into the sewer, it will have a chance to bud, leaving behind a litter of magic-hungry gray ooze pods to plague Riverspire in the future. Ω

Kevin writes: "When I was eight years old, my mom bought me an AD&D Player's Handbook *at a garage sale. I've been hooked ever since. I dedicate this adventure to Brendan and Scott, who've been there since the beginning."*

As for the other adventures, you must have read my mind. My players are in the middle of an epic campaign in which the paladin is searching for a relic called the *Axe of Baphomet*. When he finally finds it, which should happen soon, it would be great to run the PCs through "Preemptive Strike." After all, they'll need a powerful weapon to conquer *seven* red dragons!

"First People" is also of great use to me. Some time ago, my PCs were required to save and befriend a nymph named Alexia to uncover the latest clue to the aforementioned artifact. The encounter left two PCs blind, but that was easily fixed, and the PCs gained a new ally. It would be cake to make Gwendelin the evil twin of Alexia, just to cause trouble for the PCs and give them an enemy they're reluctant to kill.

Brian Corvello
Washington Depot, CT

We love hearing suggestions from readers about how to adapt and tailor individual DUNGEON adventures to specific campaigns.

A Seventh Issue?

Long, long ago, a magazine was launched to become the sister to the mighty *DRAGON® Magazine*. When the dawn came, I looked upon it and thought, "I don't need this! I can come up with my own adventures!" Thus, I turned my back on it and went my way. Such foolish pride.

After about twenty issues had gone by, I picked up the magazine once more, merely out of curiosity, and I was struck by the changes that had been wrought. Ever since then, I have faithfully bought *DUNGEON Adventures*. Rarely did I use much from it—an idea here and there, or a map or two.

Today, I find myself running two AD&D® campaigns, with a third one on the horizon. The situation is changing from pinching an idea or map to wholesale adaptation of an adventure to one or the other of the campaigns. This includes adventures that I thought were well written but of no use to me—such as "Train of Events" (Issue #44). When I read that adventure, I thought there was no way I would ever run an adventure involving a steam train. Now I do.

Another example is the Mere of Dead Men series, which will form the basis of a new campaign. May we please have more serial adventures? Printing them one by one can be a bit tedious for those who want them, but I don't think that putting them all into one issue would be good idea—what about the people who don't want or like the series? An alternative might be to publish a *DUNGEON Adventures Annual* containing a connected series plus one or two bonus adventures which may or may not be pertinent to the series.

In fact, a *DUNGEON Adventures Annual* might be the way to go, rather than monthly. We are then assured of quality throughout the year—with extra adventures that the editors could not find space for during the year.

I would like to comment briefly on "The Vale of Weeping Widows" in Issue #74. As a Side Trek, it is quite good. However, there is potential for another use. Following the ideas in "101 Paladin Quests" in *DRAGON Magazine* #257, the locale gains a new significance—particularly, the two trees in area I. Clearly, this is an excellent place for a paladin to seek atonement, find a holy sword, or find his special mount.

Ron Newsome
21 Mt. Riddell Road
Healesville 3777, Victoria, Australia

Coming in Issue #77

Cover by Stephen Daniele

"Ex Keraptis Cum Amore," by Andy Miller. An AD&D® GREYHAWK® adventure, levels 8–12.

"Visiting Tylwyth," by Scott Walley. An AD&D adventure, level 1.

"To Walk Beneath the Waves," by W. Jason Peck. An AD&D adventure, levels 3–6.

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Gamer's Guide

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In Kaloria, danger lurks behind every snowdrift.

MERTYLMANE'S ROAD

BY JASON POOLE & CRAIG ZIPSE

The road less traveled

Artwork by Matthew Mitchell
Cartography by Craig Zipse

Craig and Jason call themselves "professional procrastinators." They wrote the original "Mertylmane's Road" years ago, then filed it away and lost it. They had to redesign the adventure from scratch, with only their fond memories and a tight deadline to encourage them.

"Mertylmane's Road" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–8 characters of levels 5–7 (about 36 total levels). If the DM plans to drop this module into an existing campaign, the PCs must be able to purchase or obtain the specialized equipment necessary for adventuring in harsh winter climates. A party with multiple fighters has the best chance for success. A ranger or other character with survival and woodland skills is strongly recommended.

Particular attention must be given to the effects of bitter cold weather on all aspects of play. This adventure confronts the PCs with challenges from the elements as well as their adversaries.

Adventure Background

Kaloria is a kingdom besieged by war. For six long years, Kaloria has staved off the attacks of the Coalition, a union of three smaller neighbors to the south. Fortunately, the size and wealth of Kaloria have sustained her against the three kingdoms constantly pressing northward. The war has taken a more costly toll on the three nations of the Coalition. Their resources nearly spent, the scheming lords of Feldlyn, Bythamar, and Vilnar have devised a final tactic to break Kaloria's defenses.

Kaloria's western border is formed by the impenetrable Pillars of Heaven mountain range. A spur of this range, called the Gods' Ladder Mountains, runs eastward, just north of the cities of Nothenvell, Gamada, and Karlsfjord. North of Gods' Ladder, Kaloria's civilized lands fade into the nameless icy wastes. To the east lies the Kalorian Sea where stout warships sail icy waters defending Kaloria's rich but unsettled coast. Kaloria's southern defenses have proven impenetrable to the advances of the Coalition. Ajani of Bythamar, the

greatest Coalition general, traveled northward on the other side of the Pillars of Heaven and sought out the Jarl of the frost giants who rules the lands where summer never comes.

Ajani struck an alliance with the frost giants, promising them boundless spoils in the lands of Kaloria for guiding his army across the wastes north of the mountains. Ajani plans to swoop down upon Kaloria's unsuspecting northern cities, plundering their riches and cutting off the supply lines feeding the armies in the south.

The PCs are spending the winter in Nothenvell. They pass the cold, dark months recounting the past season's adventures, meeting with old friends, and planning next year's escapades. Nothenvell is a town friendly to adventurers and far away from the southern war, where heroes can indulge themselves using the spoils gained from the summer's exploits. Less successful adventurers supplement their coffers by hunting wolves. Wolves have been driven down from the mountains by the harsh cold and are preying on the local flocks, and the Thane has offered a generous bounty for every wolf killed.

Early one afternoon, the PCs' leisure is interrupted by a knock at the door of the hall they have rented for the winter. They open the door to find Thane Elgin, sovereign of Nothenvell, and his manservant bundled tightly against the wind and snow. Elgin comes in and removes his cloak by the fire. Finally, he speaks:

> "I have a proposition for you. As you know, Nothenvell is on the western end of an old trade road that stretches east to the port of Karlsfjord. With the lines of battle constantly shifting in the south, a route that might be friendly one day could suddenly be hostile the next. Due to these peculiarities of war, old Mertylmane's Road has, of late, become useful again. Unfortunately, the need for this route comes during the worst winter in a generation.
>
> Until now, Mertylmane's Road was merely a curiosity, traveled by adventurers such as yourselves or felons heading to the sea. A patrol is rarely sent along the road, never more than a day past the fork. It has fallen into disrepair and become a common passageway for marauding goblinkin.
>
> "The road runs through some of the roughest, least civilized land in all of Kaloria. We've had no choice but to send caravans through regardless. Adventurers and mercenaries have hired on to protect them through this rough country. Still, nearly all of these caravans have been attacked. We have heard nothing of fully one-third of the expeditions that left here. There have been reports of wildmen seen along the road. You used to hear old timers and foresters telling tales of encounters with wildmen in the mountains north of Gyhldeptis' Shield. If these wildmen really exist, then I've no doubt this hellish winter has driven them farther south, just as it pushed wolf packs down onto us from their usual hunting grounds in the north. Whether or not wildmen exist, something is keeping those caravans from getting through.
>
> "You have made a good reputation for yourself here. I want to enlist your help in opening that road. Whoever helps us bring that territory back under control will find themselves in a very favorable light. They'll make themselves known to powerful people ... the kind of people who control things like land grants and titles."

If the PCs do not warm up to the Thane's idea, he suggests the following:

> "Of course, you are under no obligation to do anything; your permits of adventure are in order. However, a patriot would want to help, and I *know* you are all patriots. It's so easy for a rumor of treason or sedition to get started in times of war, and such nasty talk causes all sorts of bad things to happen. But as I said, I know all of you are patriots who want to help. The Lenox family has a caravan leaving two days' hence from the courtyard just inside the north gate. I'll tell Lenox to be expecting your company on the trip."

The Thane makes it clear that joining the expedition is less a request than an order. He intends to pay 500 gp to each PC for scouting the road and its immediate territories. In addition, he pays twice the going rate for the head of each wolf brought back. The bounty on wolves is currently 5 gp. (If the PCs skin the dead wolves, their furs are worth 15 gp each.) PCs also earn twice the Crown's rate for every goblinkin head brought back. By species, orcs and smaller goblinkin fetch 10 gp, while gnolls and larger goblinkin fetch 15 gp per head.

The Thane does not pay for supplies or equipment, believing such expenses are the adventurers' responsibility. He pays the PCs half their fee in advance. Privatization of goblin control has worked well for Kaloria and has provided a financial base for adventurers and bounty hunters for years.

The PCs join a caravan led by a weapons merchant named Alfred Lenox. (What better way to find out who or what is attacking caravans than to be in one when it's attacked?) The PCs must provide their own gear and sleds. Lenox appreciates the extra protection but does not pay the PCs as if they were guards. However, he considers rewarding the PCs once the caravan arrives safely in Karlsfjord and once his goods are sold.

For the Dungeon Master

There are several factors at work around Nothenvell. First is the unseasonably cold and stormy winter. This has driven many predators, particularly wolves, out of their natural territories into the inhabited areas around Nothenvell. In their search for food, the wolves have inevitably run across the local flocks. Significant numbers of sheep and cattle have been eaten by the wolves. This problem is apparent to the citizens of Nothenvell. The solution Thane Elgin has adopted is to pay a bounty for every wolf killed between now and the spring festival. Since Nothenvell is a common winter retreat for adventurers, several capable hunters are pursuing these bounties.

The harsh winter has also driven bands of humanoids, who normally stay beyond the patrolled boundaries of Nothenvell in the foothills of the Gods' Ladder Mountains, closer to the settled

areas. The humanoids, like the wolves, have come in search of food. With caravans carrying valuable cargo along the old road, the humanoids cannot help but be drawn to attacking these travelers for their riches.

The tales of wildmen are true. Unlike the wolves and goblins, these normally reclusive yeti have not come south for food. They are under the influence of Ajani's advance party—see the Halls of Frost, area **20**, for details. The yeti are regarded as supernatural creatures by Nothenvell's citizenry. The townsfolk fear not only these creatures but also what they represent—a curse, a warning from the gods, or the coming of bad times in the region.

The most sinister factor at work in the area is Ajani. Just prior to Thane Elgin contacting the PCs, Ajani's advance party made it across the icy wastes and set up base camp in an abandoned dwarven outpost. They are fortifying their position, organizing supplies, and scouting the area to determine the best way to launch an attack on Kaloria's northern regions. Though the advance party is small, it is made up of powerful individuals, both human and nonhuman. So far, no one in Nothenvell knows of this group's existence.

Adventuring in the Cold

The first thing the PCs need for their excursion is warm, insulating clothing. Typical clothing consists of a hooded cloak, pants, gloves, and waterproofed leather boots. The clothes are thick, fur-lined affairs worn over common clothing or armor. Armor designed for adventuring in gentler climes cannot be worn, and wearing armor on top of cold weather clothing is impossible. The market for this clothing is booming, and an average outfit fetches 25 gp. The bulk and encumbrance of such cold weather clothing reduces the wearer's movement rate by 2.

The bulky cold weather gear has some detrimental effects on combat. Of particular hindrance are the thick mitten gloves worn to prevent frostbite on the hands. While these are worn, no fine manipulation may be performed with the fingers. No spells requiring the use of material or somatic components may be cast while wearing gloves. Also, a character may not fire a bow or crossbow or throw daggers, knives, or darts while wearing gloves. Larger missile weapons such as spears, axes, and hammers may be thrown while wearing gloves, but these attacks suffer a –1 penalty to hit. Generally, a character may not perform any actions requiring fine manipulation (tying off rope, lighting a torch, starting a fire, opening a potion, unrolling a scroll, etc.) without first removing the gloves. The bulk of wearing such heavy clothes also imposes a –1 penalty to all Dexterity checks. This same restricted movement translates into a –1 attack penalty in hand-to-hand combat and a –2 attack penalty with missile weapons. This penalty can be offset by Dexterity bonuses and magic.

Any time a character suffers damage from a bladed weapon or a creature employing claws or a bite, his cold weather clothes suffer damage in the form of rips and tears. Since the function of the clothing is to keep the cold air away and trap an envelop of warm air around a person's body, gashes and holes can render such clothing useless. Pausing to take heavy clothes off before entering combat costs a character one full round of action and insures that he attacks last on the second round. Removing these clothes once already engaged in combat is impossible because the PC becomes blind and defenseless as he pulls them off.

Cold weather clothes can withstand twelve slashing attacks before they are rendered useless. The damage scored on the PC during those dozen hits is irrelevant. A PC begins making Constitution checks after 1 turn of exposure. Failing a check means the PC suffers 1–6 points of cold damage. As long as the PC is exposed to the weather, another check must be made at the end of each subsequent turn. Strenuous activities such as engaging in combat, running, or jumping up and down negate the need for a check. However, inactivity (possibly resulting from exhaustion) forces checks to be made at a –2 penalty. A character reduced to –10 hit points by cold damage has frozen to death. Damage suffered from the cold is recovered at a rate of 1 point per hour spent resting in warm conditions. Warm conditions include being next to a fire, being inside a shelter with a heat source, or eating hot food.

A dog sled is the preferred method of conveyance for this trip. Although sleds cannot carry as much cargo as a wagon, they can traverse far rougher terrain. Plus, dogs can endure harsher weather than any other domesticated beast of burden. The PCs have two choices: They may purchase sleds and dogs themselves or hire mushers who have their own teams. A sled plus a team costs 250 gp. Hiring a musher for a trip of this length and peril costs 175 gp. It should be noted that mushers form strong bonds with the dogs in their teams. Any mention of sacrificing a dog to a pursuing monster as a snack or the "send a dog in to see if there's trap or monster ahead" trick is met with utter rejection if not violence from the musher.

Hired mushers do not view themselves as soldiers, but they are armed with handaxes and daggers. These are primarily tools but can be used in defense, if necessary. The mushers available for hire in Nothenvell possess the Animal Handling, Dog Sledding, and Fire Building proficiencies.

Unless there is significant evidence to the contrary, the PCs have no training in the proper operation of a dog sled, although they can learn the basics from Lenox's men along the way. This inexperience translates to a –3 penalty on all Dog Sledding proficiency checks. Dog Sledding proficiency checks are based on Wisdom (unmodified).

Walking through deep (12 inches or greater) unpacked snow reduces a PC's movement rate by 2. Wearing snowshoes negates this penalty.

Moving across ice requires a successful Dexterity check, with a –4 penalty if running. On a failed roll, a character falls prone and automatically loses initiative the following round. Fallen PCs must spend the entire next round regaining their footing by rolling an unmodified Dexterity check. If the roll succeeds, the PCs may attempt to move again on the next round. Crampons strapped onto boots negate the effects of ice on movement.

Dog Sleds

The dog sleds made in nearby Shaesenah are long vehicles designed to carry goods over land when travel by foot or horse becomes exceedingly difficult and dangerous. The standard sled is 10 feet long, 2 feet wide, and 3 feet tall at the cross bar. The bed of the sled is only 8 inches above the runners to keep the center of gravity low. A sled with a full team of seven dogs can carry five hundred pounds of carefully distributed weight twenty-four miles in twelve hours, assuming travel across an established trail. The team and musher are very fatigued after a day's travel and require a minimum of eight hours rest each night. Space can be left for passengers on the sled just in front of the cross bar, although their weight counts against the sled's maximum load. Passengers on a moving dog sled must be seated or kneeling to keep from throwing the sled off balance.

The lead dog is hitched to the sled by a leather thong with a quick-release metal clasp on one end. Other dogs are attached to the lead dog's thong by their own, shorter, leather thongs. Mushers use no reins. Instead, they rely on verbal commands the dogs are trained to follow. While travel over a straight, flat trail is peaceful, a musher must constantly shout commands to his team to pick the sled's course through winding wooded areas. The musher alternately "rides" on the runner extending back beyond the cross bar, or runs behind the sled to keep it from tipping over. Sleds have a foot-operated drag brake between the runners to keep from running over the dogs when they stop.

The sled dogs are not armored and are tied together, making them vulnerable to attack (AC 9 while harnessed to a sled). The dogs are bred for endurance and stamina, not for aggressiveness. The musher has his hands full issuing commands to the dogs and keeping the sled upright. Carrying the extra weight of armor and armaments while jogging behind a pack of frisky malamutes all day would practically kill the musher before he arrived to the battle, and it would assure his speedy demise once he engaged in combat. The dogs do not attack except to defend themselves from direct attack. Even then, usually only the particular dog attacked retaliates. There is a 25% chance that attacking a single dog in a team provokes a response from 1–6 of the other dogs.

Musher (1/sled): AC 8 (heavy clothing); MV 9; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (10); AL NG; handax, dagger.

Sled dog (7/sled): AC 6; MV 15; HD 1+1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SZ M; ML 10; INT semi (3); AL N; XP 35; *MM*/57.

Attacking on a Dog Sled

It is possible for a PC on the sled to attack targets on the ground. Shortbows and crossbows may be fired by passengers on the sled. While the sled is moving at half speed or better, the attacks are made at –3 to hit. Using thrown weapons such as spears and axes not only incurs the –3 penalty mentioned above but also requires the mushers to make an immediate proficiency check to keep the sled upright. If more than one passenger attacks, the mushers must make a separate check for each one. Use of hand-to-hand weapons by a passenger incurs a –2 penalty to the attack roll; and, since the attacker must necessarily be seated, he or she suffers a +2 penalty to AC. Also, the proficiency check made by the musher to keep the sled upright during a passenger's hand-to-hand attack suffers a –1 penalty. In addition to these factors, since the passenger and musher are in close proximity, any hand-to-hand attacks targeting the passenger that miss have a 50% chance of hitting the musher, requiring a second, separate attack versus the musher's AC.

Spells may be cast by passengers, but due to the jostling nature of the ride, each spell has of 10% chance of being miscast. The DM is encouraged to seize any miscast opportunities to exercise his creativity. Because of the reliance on verbal communication, it is not advisable to magically *silence* a musher or his team. Under normal circumstances, the dogs stop running after 4–16 rounds if unable to hear their musher's voice. The unnatural quiet of a *silence 15' radius* cast on the dogs themselves causes them to stop in 1–4 rounds.

Leaving Nothenvell

The Lenox caravan consists of thirty dogsleds. Each sled accommodates a single musher. Every third sled also has room reserved for a guard to ride. The mushers are all 0-level humans with no significant combat abilities, with the exception of Lenox and Ross. Lenox has made provision for ten guards, one of which rides on Lenox's sled. The guards are 1st-level fighters who possess no magical items, carry standard weapons and gear, and have no exceptional ability scores. Two sleds carry provisions (sleds 12 and 24 in the order), while cooking equipment and tents are carried on two others (sleds 5 and 18). The rest of the sleds are loaded with weapons of all sorts; pole-arms, swords, axes, and arrows. These are items contracted by the Crown to supply the armies in the south. All of the weapons are bundled in oilcloth (to protect them from the elements) and are not easily accessible.

When the PCs arrive in the courtyard on the morning they depart, read the following to them:

> The still, predawn air shakes any remnants of sleep from your mind. The white glow of snow on the ground nearly eliminates the need for torches in the courtyard. Assembled there are rows of heavily packed sleds. The dogs can sense the excitement in the air. They jump against their leads, whining and yipping. You notice a group of expensively attired people talking to one of the drivers. They must be part of the Lenox family come to see Alfred off. The driver notices your arrival and after final good-byes with his family comes your way.

Lenox introduces himself to the PCs (if they have not already met) and makes sure they are prepared to begin the journey. (See the "Lenox and Ross" sidebar for more information.) He tells them to add their sleds behind the lead sled as the caravan heads out. Lenox also understands that while the PCs are traveling with his caravan, they are working for Thane Elgin. Lenox knows that the PCs must leave the caravan to investigate anything they find suspicious. Lenox

Lenox and Ross

Alfred Lenox, human male F2: AC 4; MV 9; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (1d6+1 with *short-sword +1*); Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 18; ML 15; AL LG; cold weather clothing, *chainmail +1*, *short-sword +1*, handax, potion of *vitality* (2 doses), family crest ring, pouch containing 100 pp.

NWPs: Armorer (13), Dog Sledding (14), Endurance (13), Navigation (13), Weather Sense (13).

Alfred Lenox is a handsome man in his early thirties. He has short, dark hair and striking, blue eyes. He is clean shaven and vibrant. There is an energy about him, and his easy smile is infectious. People standing near him are always drawn by the sound of his voice and his approachable manner. Talking with Lenox, it is quickly apparent that he is a patriot. He does not, however, spew tedious monologues about "king and country," instead preferring to draw people into friendly conversations where he may explore their ideas.

Duncan Ross, human male F2: AC 7; MV 9; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (1d8+1 with battle-ax); Str 16, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 9, ML 13; AL CG; cold weather clothing, battle-ax, dagger, 20 pp in leather pouch.

NWPs: Direction Sense (15), Dog Sledding +1 (15), Survival—Arctic (10).

Duncan Ross is a tall man with a broad chest and rough features. He is an outdoorsman. He has long red hair and wears a long, bushy, red beard. Despite his unkempt appearance, he is soft spoken and reserved. In conversation he holds his comments until last, waiting to assess what everyone else has to say first. He is sparing with words, preferring to get straight to the point. He is absolutely loyal to Lenox and defends him to the death.

The DM should make sure Lenox and Ross are not both killed in the course of the adventure, since their input is critical in fully concluding the adventure.

also introduces them to Ross. Unless the party has any pertinent questions, Lenox is anxious to get the caravan moving. Lenox climbs into the bed of a wagon high enough for all to see and hear him:

> "Gentlemen, the task we are about to undertake is not an easy one, as things worthwhile rarely are. But this cargo is needed in the south, by our countrymen fighting the war against the Coalition. Kaloria is under attack this day, making all of us soldiers. Though we may not be fighting on the field against invaders from Feldlyn or Vilnar, we fight just as surely on behalf of the Crown. Let us take our northern steel to our cousins in the south so they can keep Kaloria free!"

Enthusiastic shouts come from the crowd in response to Lenox's speech. Lenox jumps down from his vantage point and strains against his sled, calling his team to pull. The sled heads toward the gate as the other sleds get under way. Lenox takes the lead, and Ross is the last sled in line until they reach the fork, three days out of Nothenvell. At that point, Ross takes the lead and Lenox moves back to the middle of the caravan.

The Journey

The following encounters occur as the PCs travel from Nothenvell to Karlsfjord, a journey expected to take twenty days.

Day 1

> The sleds glide across the deep snow covering the road north. The sight of dog sleds, especially so many, causes everyone you pass to stand and stare, waving as you rush by.

The first day's travel is uneventful, and Lenox anticipates that the caravan should reach the northern fork by the end of the third day.

Day 2

> Traveling farther north, the caravan has the road to itself. Cottages appear less frequently, and there is little activity at any of the farms you pass. It's as if the residents are in hibernation, braving the cold only to feed and water their sheltered livestock or bring in more fire wood.

The second day passes without event. The evening is spent around a large fire, with Lenox and Ross telling ghost stories about the "wildmen of the north" and laughing over cups of warm mead.

Day 3

> The Gods' Ladder Mountains grow taller as you approach the fork that takes the caravan away from the civilized lands of Kaloria and onto the old, forgotten Mertylmane's Road. Taking the right fork, you turn toward the wooded foothills of the mountains. The road is no longer straight and even, but climbs over hills and into valleys. The mushers work their teams around the tight bends, weaving the caravan deeper into the forest.

At the fork, Ross takes the lead position since he has more experience at driving trails. Lenox takes position half way back in the caravan.

Day 4

> Shortly after beginning the day's journey, the road forks. One branch veers southward, deeper into the forest. The other fork heads steadily eastward following the river. The river has beaten back the tree line from its banks, making a snowy avenue through the woods.
>
> In places, the surface of the river is completely frozen over. The ice is strong enough to support a blanket of snow, giving the false appearance of a wide, safe road ahead. The illusion is only occasionally spoiled where the river's flow breaks through the ice and creates a black patch of rolling water.
>
> Lenox decides to take the river fork but bids everyone to be careful. He knows that taking a curve too wide, on what might seem solid ground, could actually suspend a driver and sled on a knife's blade of brittle ice. Cautiously, the caravan presses forward.

All inexperienced sled drivers (read, any PCs driving a sled) must make a successful Dog Sledding proficiency check at a +3 bonus to avoid accidentally sliding into the river. Any sled falling into the river is doomed, sinking completely after 4 rounds. Though the dogs pull valiantly against this impending fate, they too are pulled in on the fourth round unless someone cuts their leads. The act of cutting the leads sends the sled into icy oblivion that same round unless someone is braced to hold onto the sled to prevent this.

A PC outfitted in cold weather clothing has little chance of swimming. (A DM may allow PCs to make a Swimming proficiency check at –3 each round to remain afloat.) The driver or passenger of any sled going into the river must hang onto the sled to keep from being pulled under by the current. To escape the water, a character must make a Strength check. A character on the river bank may attempt to aid someone trying to get out of the water. If a PC on the bank makes a successful Strength check, add a +3 bonus to the Strength check of the PC in the water. An additional person on the frozen bank trying to help the same fallen character gives the PC in the water a +6 bonus. PCs who get wet must immediately strip out of all their wet clothes, put on dry ones, and rest by a fire for 3–5 hours to avoid losing 1 point of Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution each hour. If any score reaches zero, the PC dies. Lost points recover at a rate of 1 per hour each.

Provided the caravan does not need to stop to thaw out members, early in the afternoon the PCs reach area **A** (as indicated on the wilderness map).

A. Bugbear Camp. Cutting across the road in front of the caravan are obvious signs of travel. A ranger or PC with the Tracking proficiency may determine that the tracks were made sometime after the last snowfall. Six to twelve humanoids left the road, along with a dogsled. Clearly an ambush was laid here, and the target of the ambush was another caravan that passed through the woods two or three days ago. Only one of the caravans' sleds was waylaid after a brief skirmish. There is no evidence to suggest that any of the combatants died during the ambush. It seems the humanoids waited for the last sled and attacked it. Nothing further may be gleaned from this area.

To the northwest, the trail leads to a small clearing after an hour of travel on foot (thirty minutes by sled). In the center of this clearing is a dark mound approximately two feet in diameter. The trail continues across the clearing and into the woods on the other side. Examination of the mound reveals that it is, in fact, a pile of frozen entrails and bloody hides. The hides are dog skins. Examination of the clearing shows the humanoids camped here briefly, dining on half of the dogs from the sled team. Following the trail for another hour on foot brings the PCs to a shallow, sheltered valley from which faint wisps of smoke rise.

> The tracks in front of you fade into the ubiquitous whiteness of a small valley. Short ridges strain above the frozen wilderness and offer some shelter to the snow-laden spruce thicket within the valley. The wind snaps at you with crisp, sharp blows, allowing you to catch a breath before another buffet stings your face. There is the slight aroma of fire lingering in the air, not as heavy as smoke, but so alien in this frozen landscape as to betray the presence of someone or something trying to stave away the frost within the arms of this valley.

No guards are posted at the mouth of the valley, and no attempt has been made to cover the trail. Venturing into the valley reveals obvious signs of habitation. Smoke originates from a cleft in the hillside. When the PCs come within 30 yards of the cleft, the two remaining sled dogs, which are tied to a tree 20 feet from the cleft, begin barking vigorously. The extreme circumstances the dogs have experienced have agitated them to the point at which not even a ranger can calm them. Nothing short of magic or death silences the dogs once they are roused.

A PC approaching the dogs invisibly can move within 20 feet of the cleft before the dogs take notice. A character using *silence 15' radius* can move within 10 feet before the barking begins (at which point the dogs are within the spell's area of effect and effectively silenced).

Two rounds after the dogs begin barking, bugbears emerge from the cleft. They emerge four per round until all have appeared. Their recent successful raid has boosted this tattered band's spirits, and their morale is not easily broken. They attack PCs on sight.

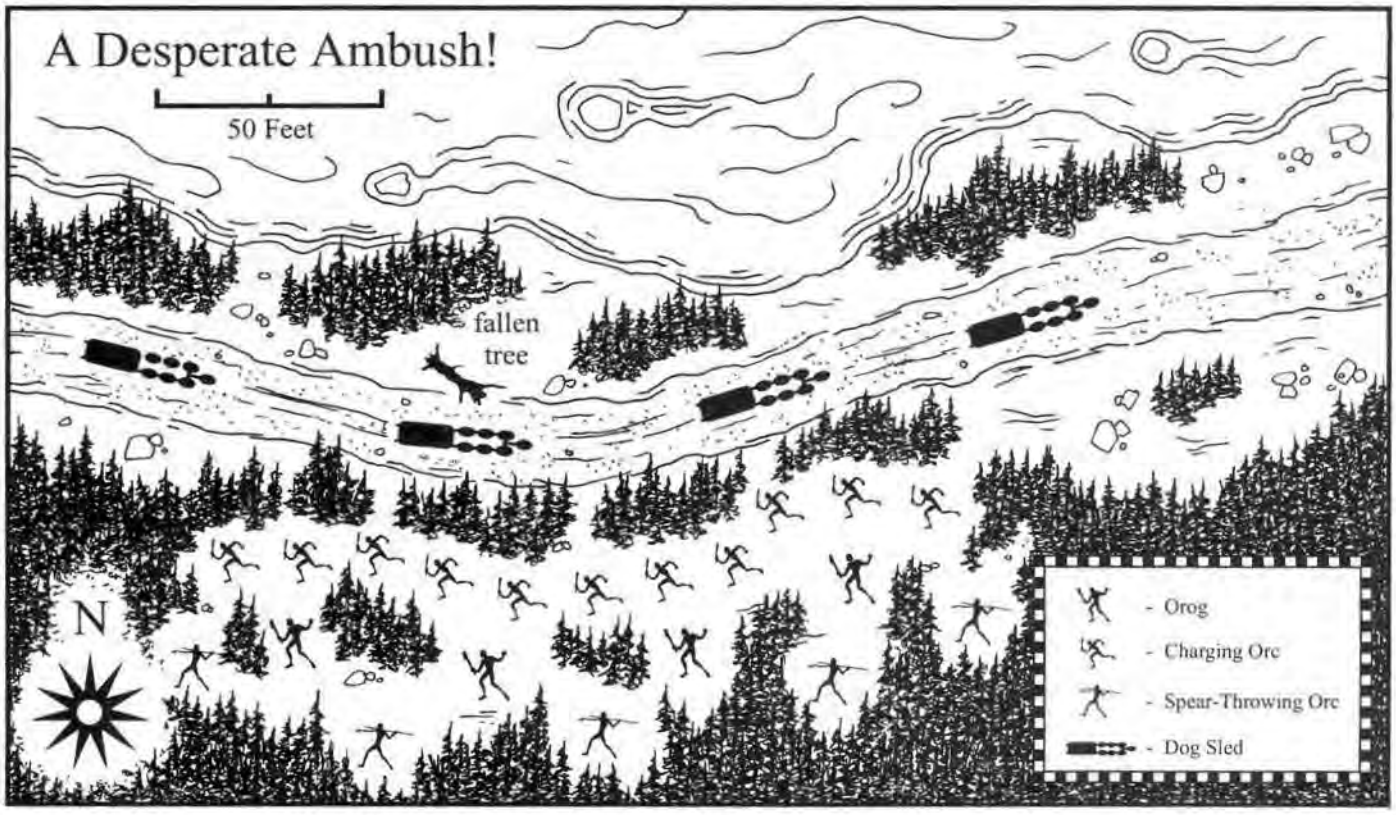
The bugbears are the remnants of a larger group, and they have nothing of value in the hillside cleft. This location is not a permanent lair and was chosen due to its proximity to the road. These monsters were pushed into this region by the harsh winter.

Bugbears (8): AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 20, 18, 15 (×2), 14 (×3), 13; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8 or by weapon type; SA +2 to damage caused in melee; SZ L; ML 14; INT average (8); AL CE; XP 120; *MM*/32; morning star (50%) or battle-ax (50%).

Day 5

> The caravan continues to follow the road alongside the river for a second day. Everyone's mood is somber as they carefully steer their teams around areas where the river has gnawed away at the road's embankment. In some areas, the river's hunger has left a trail only three feet across wedged between a sheer 30' drop on one side and a wall of icy shards dangling from the trees on the other.
>
> You draw a relieved breath as the road widens to a comfortable span. You thought you saw a bridge ahead in the distance as the sled lurched around the last bend. As you gaze out over the river, looking to spot the bridge again, there is a sudden explosion of sound to your right. The whole hillside appears to be in motion. You think for an instant it is a landslide coming to sweep you into the river's icy embrace. Then the reality of what is happening sets in as cold and harsh as any winter storm—*ambush!*

The PCs have reached area **B** on the wilderness map. The ambush takes place shortly after noon on the fifth day.



B. A Desperate Ambush! As the third sled passes the fallen tree indicated on the above map, the orcs attack. Remember the movement of a sled may not necessarily end when the combat begins. If a musher is slain while the sled is moving, it takes the dogs a while to figure out what's happened and stop. There are sixteen orcs and four orogs positioned along a 100-yard stretch of the road. This band is starving and presses the attack even if they are outnumbered. They have had several cold, hungry days to think through this ambush and have come up with a plan.

Five orcs are armed with three spears each. They throw their spears at the caravan, gaining a surprise attack. The only sleds within spear-throwing range if the caravan is traveling in typical formation are the second and third in line. Each following round, these orcs throw another spear until they have thrown all three.

There are eleven orcs positioned to charge and attack the caravan when they see the first volley of spears. The eleven orcs enter combat on the second round, gaining a +2 attack bonus for charging. These orcs attack, in order of preference, any humans or demihumans softened up by the initial spear volley, any characters rushing to the aid of their comrades, and last, sled dogs. These orcs are armed with makeshift clubs, since they surrendered their spears to facilitate the five orcs providing artillery on the hill.

The four orogs are roughly 35 yards apart along the ambush site. They wait until the round after the eleven orcs charge before charging into combat themselves. They evaluate which members of the caravan pose the greatest threat. Once this determination is made, the orogs attack this threat, striking on the third round.

Spear-throwing orcs (5): AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 8, 7 (×2), 6 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8 or by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (9); AL LE; XP 15; *MM*/281; hide armor, three spears, club.

Orcs (11): AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; hp 8 (×2), 7 (×3), 6 (×4), 5 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8 or by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (9); AL LE; XP 15; *MM*/281; hide armor, club.

Orogs (4): AC 4; MV 6; HD 3; hp 21, 17, 16, 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10 or by weapon type +1 (Strength bonus); SZ M; ML 14; INT high (13); AL LE; XP 65; *MM*/281; piecemeal armor, club.

PCs casting spells with visible effects are targeted by the spear-throwing orcs. The round after throwing the last of their spears, the orcs on the hill grab their clubs and charge. They cut dead dogs off the sled leads and carry them away. Other orcs not similarly encumbered grab rations, spare clothing, and dropped weapons in preparation for retreat. After 2 rounds of grabbing goodies on the road, the spear-chucking orcs sound the signal to escape. After hearing the escape call, any orc engaged in combat runs down the north embankment to their pre-planned escape route, giving characters one attack of opportunity.

The orcs flee down the embankment toward the river, then onto the packed snow along its banks. They run east, following the river downstream. Members of the band not carrying loot provide rear guard for the retreat. It is also possible a pair of orcs might jump on a sled

and try to drive it away, if there is an unmanned sled with a full team. They are particularly tempted to try this if the sled carries more provisions than they can easily carry off on foot.

If the PCs feel especially reckless, they can drive a sled over the embankment and pursue the fleeing orcs. Taking a sled over the steep embankment is dangerous and requires the driver to make a Dog Sledding proficiency check. If the check fails, the driver must roll a saving throw vs. paralyzation. If the saving throw is successful, the sled merely wipes out going over the bank and requires 1d3+2 rounds to right and get under way again. If the saving throw fails, one of the following results occur (roll 1d4):

1) The runners on the sled are broken in the fall; the sled is rendered useless.

2) The sled rolls, breaking the cargo bindings and scattering everything on the sled across a large area. It takes 1 turn plus 2–8 rounds to repack everything.

3) The sled overtakes the team on the steep hill, crushing 1–3 dogs when the sled hits the bottom. Each injured dog suffers 2–8 points of damage.

4) The sled rolls over the driver, inflicting 2–8 points of damage and knocking the driver unconscious for 1–3 turns.

The orcs continue to run downstream for several hundred yards as a group. If the PCs continue the pursuit, the orcs break off by pairs into the woods at 30-yard intervals and scatter. The band of orcs slowly regroups the next morning at the ambush site.

Day 6

> The forest begins to thin. No longer are you passing through ancient stands of trees. Now you pass under the low boughs of trees that have fought hard against the relentless northern wind. Their broken, twisted limbs attest to the constant battle fought here, where the border between forest and tundra is drawn.

On the evening of this day, Ross instructs the men to cut wood and pack it onto their sleds in place of rations which have been expended. Rich pine lights quickly and burns hot.

Day 7

> The road leads you beyond the edge of the forest into a frozen wasteland where nothing grows taller than the occasional sprig of dead grass protruding through the snow.
>
> The sky grows overcast and threatening. After hours on the road, all that changes are the patterns of snow blowing in front of you. The road itself has vanished, at least to your eye. Somehow, Ross leads the caravan through this endless white. No longer does there appear to be any distinction between road and field, field and sky. If it were not for the sight of a sled up ahead, you would soon lose your way, wandering aimlessly as the cold or madness overtook you.

Once the PCs reach this point in their journey, the scenery does not change significantly for the next ten days. Only notable days are listed.

Day 9

> Moving through this vast, bitter-cold expanse without any landmarks to judge your progress dulls your mind. You press forward in a surreal, dream-like state. Occasionally you wake with a start, even though you never closed your eyes. The boundless snow seems close and suffocating. Panting dogs and voices from the sleds in front of you ease your mind.
>
> The caravan is stopping.

The PCs have reached area **C** on the wilderness map. Continue with the following encounter:

C. Frozen Remains. Near the lead sled, Ross is on his knees raking the snow out from around the body of a human male not attired in cold weather clothing and frozen solid. Lenox recognizes the man; he is one of the younger sons of Guildmaster Mentieth. The Mentieths are a powerful merchant house in Nothenvell. The body has a prominent bruise on its face but otherwise shows no signs of combat.

The Mentieth caravan was attacked and destroyed by yeti. If a *speak with dead* spell is cast, the following information is revealed:

- The body was once Frederick Mentieth. He was part of a caravan transporting leather goods, boots, gloves, sword belts, and straps to Karlsfjord.
- Whatever attacked the caravan made hideous roaring sounds.
- Frederick was knocked unconscious by a blow to the head. When he woke, it was dark.
- No one answered as he called out to his fellows. Terrified, he began to run and kept running until he collapsed from exhaustion.

Day 10

In the dark hours just past midnight after the tenth day of travel, a surprise interrupts the PCs' slumber. Read the following to any PCs on watch:

> Pulling night watch is a bitter task. With snow on the ground reflecting even starlight, the nights are rarely impenetrable. There is just enough illumination for your mind to trick you into seeing something moving here or there just beyond your sight.
>
> As you ponder your misfortune of having to pull this lonely watch, the silence is suddenly destroyed. An inhuman sound rises out of the darkness. The noise rises and falls, becoming more horrible. Then it is suddenly gone. The dogs are all on their feet but so stunned by the sound they have not yet made up their minds to bark.
>
> Then another sound—a scream—whirls you around toward its source. It is the familiar sound of terror given birth by a human tongue. One of the tents seems to explode, flying apart into tatters as the first voice is joined by others. A hulking, ghostly shape coalesces from the snow and rushes toward you.

This encounter takes place at area **D** on the wilderness map.

D. Yeti Attack. Since it is dark, and this is the PCs' first encounter with yeti, take pains not to describe the creatures' appearance except in broad, overblown terms. The DM should cultivate the PCs'

fear of the unknown and play it to best effect. If the PCs kill any yeti, they can take a better look in the morning.

Four male yeti attack the camp, rising up from the snow around the camp's perimeter. When the attack begins, the yeti tear open tents, rending the fabric and snapping poles. The yeti attack in a random, disorderly fashion. These creatures are under Inoke's magical control (see area **20** in the "Halls of Frost" section), which is why they behave in such a strange manner.

If one of the yeti is slain, or if all individuals have suffered damage roughly equivalent to one-fourth of their total hit points, they break off the attack and flee to the north. If any of the yeti have a *light* or *faerie fire* spell cast upon them, the PCs should be able to visually track them at nearly any reasonable distance until the spell's duration expires.

Following or tracking the yeti leads the PCs due north. If the PCs come too close to the yeti, the creatures use their camouflage ability to blend with the snow and let the PCs pass them.

Yeti (4): AC 6; MV 15; HD 4+4; hp 24 each; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1–6/1–6; SA squeeze (inflicts 2–16 points of damage if either claw hits with a natural 20); SD immune to normal cold, invisible in snow and ice; SW suffer double damage from fire-based attacks; SZ L; ML 13; INT average (8); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/368.

If the yeti evade the party's pursuit, they regroup with the other yeti in the vicinity and attack the caravan again within eight hours. This second attack should occur during the early morning, just after the caravan starts moving. In total, there are sixteen yeti (including the ones involved in the previous night's attack) in the area under Inoke's magical influence. Any of these who haven't been slain join the attack, using the same strategy as before. These yeti have the same statistics as above.

Leading the yeti in subsequent attacks is a chraal—a creature summoned from the Paraelemental Plane of Ice by Inoke with the aid of her god. The monster's skin is composed of glistening black ice, but this is merely a shell encasing a luminous and shapeless entity of cold malevolence. Once reduced to 0 hit points, the chraal explodes in a wave of cold energy, inflicting 3–18 points of nonmagical cold damage to all creatures within 20 feet (save vs. spell for half damage). The chraal is destroyed in the resulting blast.

The chraal does not retreat, fighting until it or its enemies are slain. The yeti keep their distance, for they are not immune to the chraal's *cone of cold* attacks. Yeti reduced to one-quarter hit points flee northward, using their camouflage ability to avoid pursuit.

Chraal: AC 2; MV 15; HD 8+8; hp 52; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2–12/2–12; SA breathe *cone of cold* once/turn for 8d4+8 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage); SD immune to normal and magical cold; SW suffers double damage from magical fire-based attacks; SZ L; ML 18; INT average (9); AL NE; XP 4,000; New monster.

After this attack, Lenox and Ross are convinced of foul play. These attacks continue to occur at roughly eight-hour intervals until the caravan is destroyed or all the yeti are killed. While Lenox and Ross are obliged to see the caravan through to Karlsfjord, the PCs were hired to discover the reason for the caravan attacks. In other words, the DM needs to move the PCs in a northward direction.

If all subtle attempts to move the PCs north fail, the following event can be used to lead them by the hand:

Snow Dwarf

A stout, heavily-bundled figure appears by the road, waving at the caravan. This is Azidem, a dwarf who lives in the northern mountains. If the caravan stops, he says that he and his brethren have been troubled by the recent arrival of "hostile forces" in the northern mountains. Azidem knows only that a small army of "barbarians" has gathered at an abandoned dwarven stronghold known as the Halls of Frost, and that these barbarians have allied with the humanoids and frost giants who dwell in the northern mountains.

Azidem is a dwarven thief and exile who, prior to Ajani's arrival, was using the abandoned Halls of Frost for shelter. Although he resents being ousted, he says that he just doesn't like the thought of the humanoids and giants using the old dwarven stronghold as their base. Azidem was chased from the northern mountains by howling yeti, but he claims that he received a powerful vision that led him to seek help from "outsiders." In truth, his discovery of the caravan was mere happenstance.

Azidem can provide little information about the frost giants or hobgoblins. He knows that the humanoids are led by a sorceress and that she exerts control over the yeti that lair in the mountains. Azidem has seen her only once: a towering woman with white hair and blue skin. The dwarf has never seen Malachi of Bythamar or heard his name uttered.

The dwarf agrees to accompany the PCs to the Halls of Frost but declines to venture inside until the current inhabitants are expelled. Azidem is a treacherous and greedy coward who would not hesitate to turn against the PCs if his life depended on it.

Azidem, dwarf male T3: AC 8; MV 3; hp 17; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 9; SZ M; ML 11; AL CN; furs, wooden snowshoes, club, dagger, wineskin, tinderbox.

The Trail North

Four hours north of Mertylmane's Road, the PCs encounter the following scene:

> The solemn whiteness of the landscape is cleft by a 20'-wide crimson stripe. The ribbon of color stretches out of sight in both directions. As you approach the stripe in stunned silence, you can see the snow has been pushed or plowed aside and the scarlet surface lies slightly lower than the top crust of snow. It becomes apparent that something was dragged across the snow. From the way the snow is pushed aside, it appears that whatever made this spectacle was moving north. Picking up a handful of the crimson snow in your hand, you see the frozen droplets of blood that stain its surface.

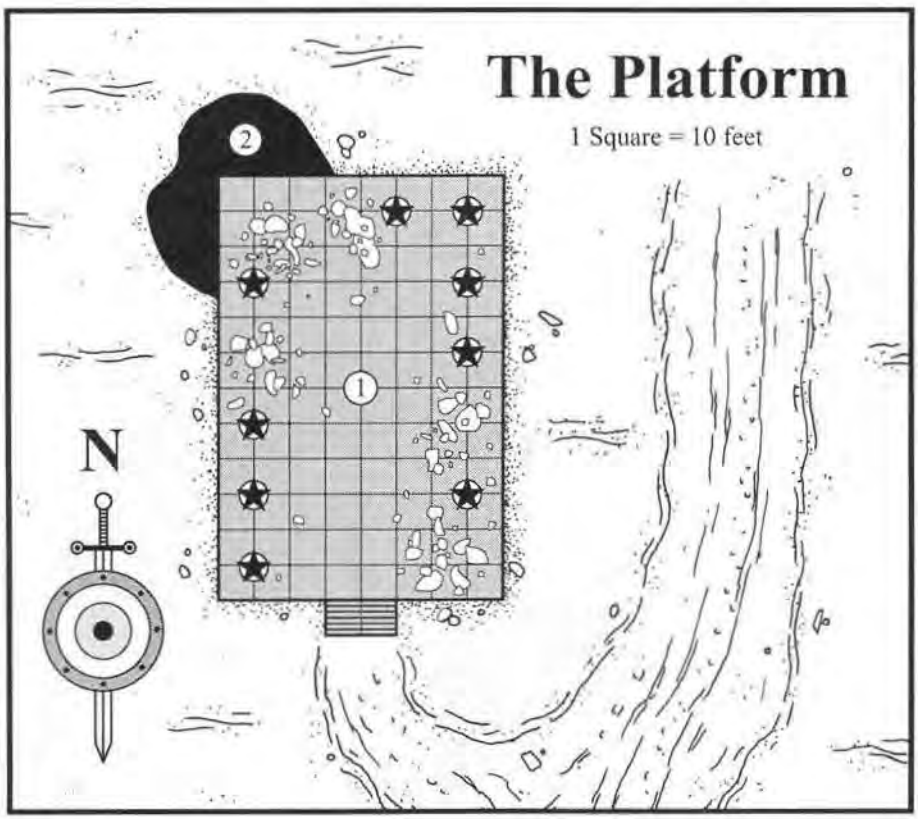
The bloody trail slowly changes from crimson to pink, and finally becomes a colorless white drag mark within two to three hours' travel. At this point, the PCs see the source of the track:

Two hundred yards ahead are two figures pulling a sled. They stand three times as tall as a man. The sled these giants are pulling is larger than the heavy cargo wagons that ferry goods into Nothenvell with twelve oxen under their yokes. Behind the sled, tied to ropes, are the carcasses of several dozen reindeer. The giants, totally engrossed by their toil, never cast a sideways glance across the snowfields.

In front of the giants, also pulling the sled, are six hobgoblins. The PCs cannot see the hobgoblins until they are within 30 yards of the sled, since they are approaching from behind. These giants and hobgoblins are part of Ajani's advanced reconnaissance group. They are returning from cutting wood several days to the south. On the way back, they encountered a herd of reindeer. The hobgoblins set upon the deer with their bows. They fired into the vast herd until their quivers were empty. Then they gathered the carcasses and tied them to the sled. Exhilarated by the slaughter, not a single hobgoblin or giant noticed the bloody trail behind them.

The added weight of the deer on top of a heavy load of wood has taken the giddiness out of the group, though, as they labor against the ropes pulling the sled. The events of the day have tired the hobgoblins and giants, making them careless. The PCs can approach as close as they wish before being noticed, as long as they come up directly behind the sled and do not approach using sled dogs. The giants and hobgoblins are so fatigued that they suffer a –1 penalty to all attack rolls and inflict 1 less point of damage per attack (minimum 1 point).

The sled is 45 feet long, 15 feet wide, and piled 10 feet high with logs. If the PCs board the sled, the giants have a 1-in-10 chance of noticing the activity. Atop the sled are two giant-sized battle-axes. Also riding the sled, near the front, is a human bundled against the cold and reclined for a nap. The human, Gustalf, is in charge of this foray and has not performed a lick of manual labor since leaving the Halls of Frost. He is so unprepared, in fact, that he took his sword belt off and hung it on a post near the front of the sled (since he could not comfortably sleep wearing it). A cocked and loaded light crossbow and five extra bolts in a quiver lie next to his sword.



Once the giants or hobgoblins are attacked, they fight to the death. Gustalf, on the other hand, snivels and begs for mercy if the giants are slain. He is sneaky and breaks any surrender vows to run away at his earliest opportunity.

Frost giants (2): AC 0; MV 12; HD 14+3; hp 73, 63; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+9 (unarmed) or 2d8+9 (battle-ax); SD impervious to cold: SZ H (21' tall); ML 14; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 7,000; *MM*/140. These giants do not hurl boulders due to the scarcity of rocks in this region.

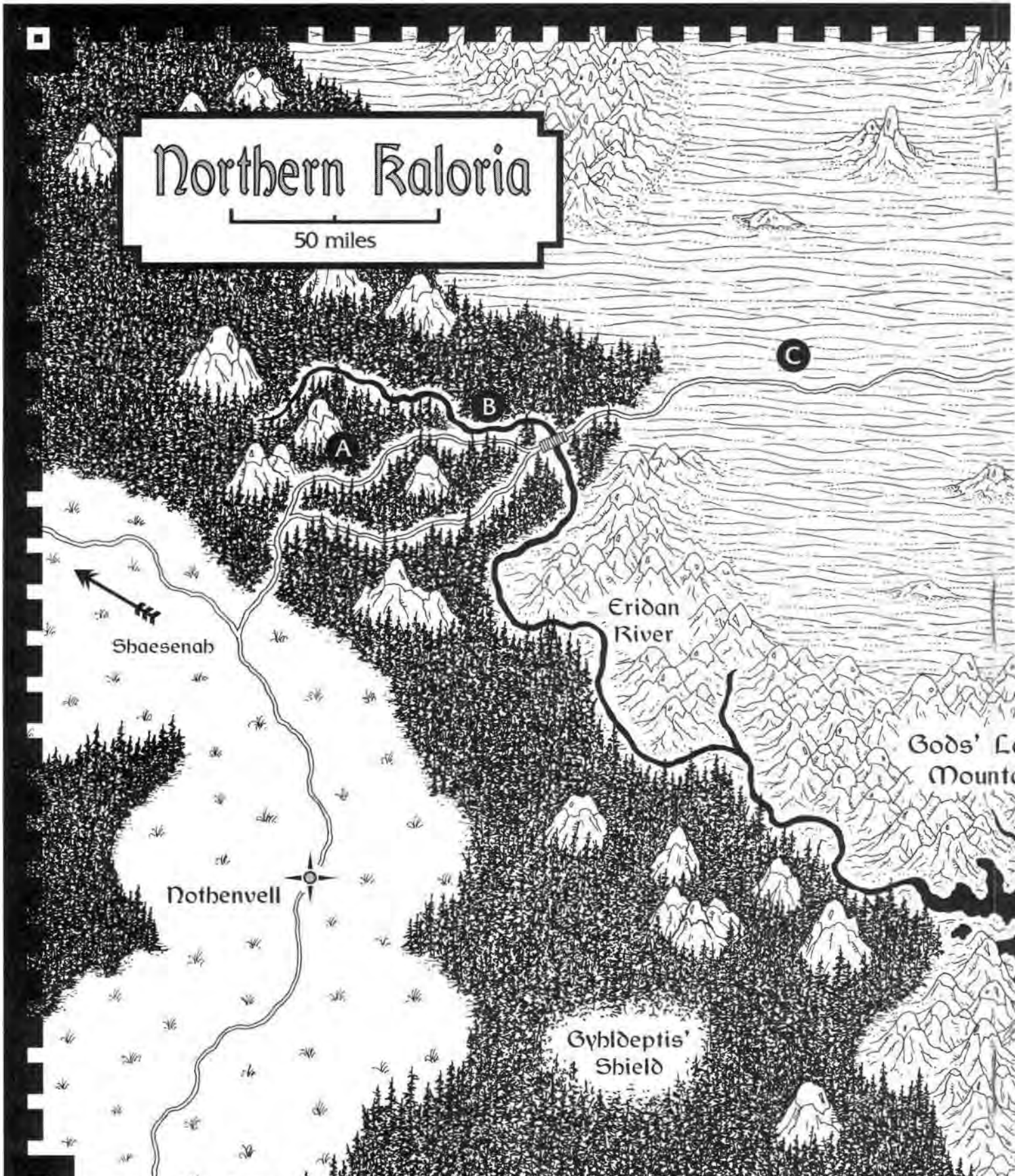
Hobgoblins (6): AC 6; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 9, 8 , 7, 6, 5, 3; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 35; *MM*/191; hide armor, broadsword, longbow (no arrows remaining).

Gustalf, human male F2: AC 5; MV 9; F2; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 7; SZ M; ML 9; AL CE; XP 35; cold weather clothing, chainmail armor, bastard sword, pouch containing 35 gp, gold earring (worth 15 gp).

Directly in the path of the giants is a dark form of a building, but it is still too far away to make out any details. Once the characters finish this encounter it is near dark and snow begins to fall. The building ahead is still visible, but there are no light sources near it. A few turns of travel brings them to this lonely structure, which is fully described in area **E** below.

E. The Platform.

Oddly out of place in this frozen world, a platform open to the sky sits in the middle of the tundra. Stone blocks form a floor seven feet above the snow. Huge stone columns, carved into statues as tall as giants, stand around the edge of the rectangular platform. Each statue is carved in the likeness of an armored dwarf. Some have toppled over and lie shattered on the floor. Leading onto the platform is a staircase, which is miraculously free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B
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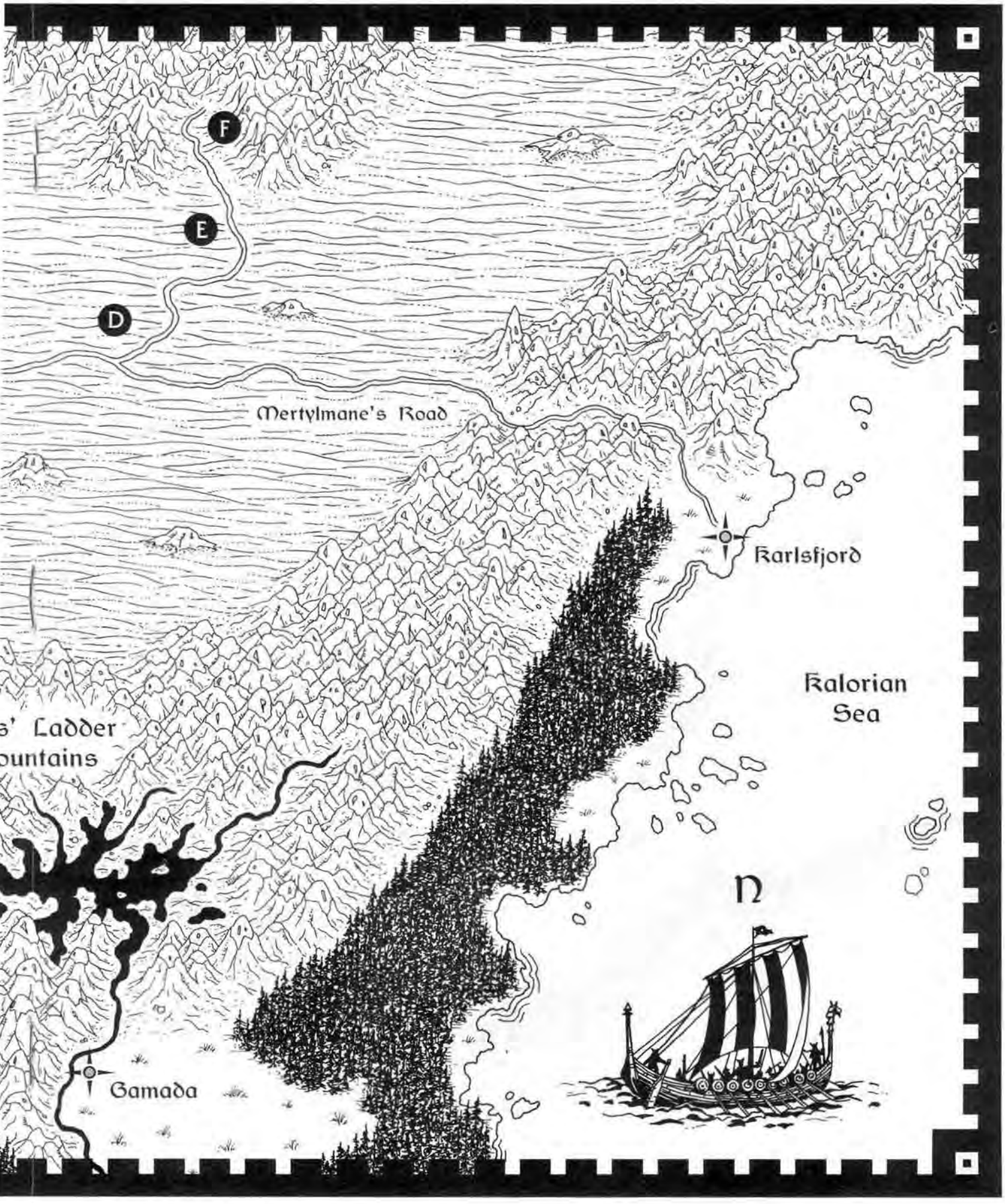
Nothenvell
Gyhldeptis' Shield


F
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The snow assumes a sinister form.

> of snow or ice. In fact, the whole structure seems free of any trace of snow. As you approach the stone platform, measuring its girth, the eyes of the statues seem to follow you with downcast, dour stares.

There are two areas of interest: the platform itself (area **1**) and a slushy pool northwest of the platform (area **2**).

1. Platform. PCs standing on the platform feel the winds subside and the temperature rise. The magical warmth imparted by the platform keeps PCs comfortable wearing only normal clothing. Even though the statues support no roof, the snow somehow avoids falling on the platform. The PCs can camp for the night quite comfortably on top of the platform.

If the PCs spend the night on the platform, they regain an extra hit point from sleeping the night. No checks for random encounters should be rolled during the night, since creatures shun this area.

Searching for secret doors on the platform reveals a sliding stone in the floor that conceals a 3'-square compartment. In the compartment is a 2' × 2' × 1' stone chest. The chest is neither trapped nor locked, and inside are nine vials labeled in Dwarvish. The labels read "for blindness," "for poison," or "for injury." Two of the potions *cure blindness*, two of the potions *neutralize poison* (two doses), and the remaining five vials contain potions of *extra-healing*.

The 14'-tall statues that enclose the platform are carved in the likeness of unique individuals. Careful examination of the statues reveals a curious feature about the center statue on the eastern side of the platform. Although not obvious at a glance, the various elements of the statue (clothing, armor, weapons, position of the arms) seem to form a ladder leading up to the statue's shoulder. A character climbing up to the shoulder, which requires no climbing roll or ability check, finds two 1"-diameter metal loops protruding from the statue's head. They are placed side by side about 1 foot apart. Sighting through one loop and lining up the other so they are concentric to the viewer isolates one peak of a small mountain range rising to the north. This peak is made magically visible to the viewer even at night. The peak is seven hours' travel from the platform.

Azidem shuns the platform and does not know about the scrying device above, but he can identify the peak seen through the statue's "eyepiece" as the location of the Halls of Frost.

2. Enchanted Pool. Snow drifts or deep accumulations in the immediate vicinity are melted away by the magic of the platform. This constant trickle of melting snow along the platform's sides has formed an icy, slushy "pool" around the northwest corner of the platform. The concentration of this distilled magical energy from the melted snow has taken the form of snowmen (variants of mudmen) that rise from the pool and attack all intruders.

It takes the snowmen 1–6 rounds to become aware of the PCs' presence. Once they are aware of the party, two of the creatures emerge from the pool each round and fight to the death.

A snowman behaves and attacks in the same manner as a mudman, except it is composed of slush. Snowmen hurl slush at their opponents, who are treated as AC 10 (modified by Dexterity and magic) for attack purposes. Hurled slush crystallizes on impact and slows the victim's movement rate by 1. While hurling slush, a snowman advances on its victim; once within 10 feet, it hurls itself at its quarry. A successful hit destroys the snowman but reduces the victim's movement rate by 4. A victim whose movement is reduced to 0 is immobilized and begins suffocating for 1–8 points of damage per round. Open flame or intense heat frees the immobilized victim in 1 round. The snowmen cannot attack PCs on the platform.

Snowmen (20): AC 10; MV 3; HD 1; hp 8 (×7), 7 (×8), 5, 4 (×3), 3; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA suffocation; SD magical weapons needed to hit; immune to poison and spells that affect living creatures; SW fire-based attacks inflict double damage; destroyed by *purify food and drink* and *destroy water* spells; SZ S (4' tall); ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/260 (mudman, variant).

Lying almost completely submerged in the pool is a huge armored skeleton. It is, in fact, the skeletal remains of a frost giant. Tucked under the giant's belt is a sack containing the following items in addition to the usual "trinkets" (skulls, bones, ropes, bits of hide, and rocks that fill a giant's sack).

❖ A *stone of sharpening*. Any normal weapon sharpened daily with this *stone* gains, after seven consecutive days of sharpening, the ability to strike creatures that can only be harmed by magical weapons. Using the *stone* also protects the blade from nicks and other forms of damage caused by repeated use. These effects last only so long as the *stone* is used on a blade every day. If a full day passes without the blade being treated, the effects are lost until it has faithfully been sharpened for seven more days.

☛ An *apothecary's amulet*. This potent protective device is a medallion of silver and jade. When pressed against the flesh of any poisoned creature, it bestows the equivalent of a *neutralize poison* spell. The amulet has charges which are evidenced by the jade growing darker each time it is used. When the final charge is expended, the *amulet* shatters. The *amulet* currently has 12 charges.

☛ *Bracers of hunting*. These bronze and leather bracers triple the ranges of hurled weapons (including axes and spears).

☛ 15 pp, 350 gp, 518 sp, 163 cp, and 5 gems worth 100 gp each.

When the PCs near the mountain seen through the scrying device on the platform, proceed with area **F** below.

F. Into the Northern Mountains.

> No trees cling to the slopes of the mountains. Only snow and rock compose their bulk. Clouds, heavy with the essence of winter, drag themselves over the peaks, beginning their journey to the lands of the south.
>
> At the base of one mountain, just above where tundra strikes the mountain's rising foot, is a dark cliff with a strange symmetry to it. Compared to the jagged shapes of ice-carved stone around it, this area seems to betray the work of man and iron.

The PCs have reached the dwarven stronghold referred to by Azidem as the Halls of Frost. The stronghold is more fully detailed below.

The Halls of Frost

The Halls of Frost is a deserted dwarven complex. Once humans came here to trade for dwarven steel. Mertylmane, an adventurer and shrewd businessman, blazed the trail to this remote site. For years afterward, humans enjoyed a favorable exchange with the dwarves.

Then the frost giants came. No one knows whether they came to pillage or whether they felt wronged by the dwarves. After routing the dwarves from their mountain stronghold, the giants returned to the mountains, their terrible vengeance satisfied.

Now, the frost giants have returned to the Halls of Frost. This time they come as allies of General Ajani of Bythamar. Ajani sent an advance party to secure the abandoned halls as a base of operations. Scouts were deployed to assess Northern Kaloria's weaknesses and map an initial attack. Malachi, Ajani's cousin, was chosen to command this group. The Jarl of the frost giants sent five of his warriors with Malachi to guide him through the barren wastes. The giants built special sleds to carry their fragile new allies through the icy wilderness. The Jarl's niece, Inoke, a half-giantess and shaman, chose to travel east with Malachi and his men, using her magic to enslave the yeti and the hobgoblins.

Malachi's men have spent the past month clearing the complex of wreckage. Secure in the remoteness of this complex, the men have begun to build creature comforts such as cots and tables while neglecting more important priorities such as fortifying the ruined entrances. Malachi and Inoke have become infatuated with each other. With his mind preoccupied by the giantess, Malachi has been negligent in his command.

Ground Level

1. The "Courtyard." In front of the cliff face is a flat span of rock several hundred feet across. This expanse of rock is partially covered with snow. The constant wind keeps much of the snow blown off of this area. Partially protruding through the snow are large amounts of rubble along with the bones of slain dwarves and giants.

In the cliff are three large entranceways. The faintest hint of light can be seen emanating from the rightmost opening. No movement is visible between where the PCs stand and the face of the cliff a hundred yards away. As the PCs cross the flat area in front of the cliff, read or paraphrase the following description:

> Rubble and bones litter the frigid courtyard. Broken timbers, shards of rock, and the rusted iron of forgotten battles lie in sprawling piles. You peer at the three gaping entrances, two of which are set with heavy stone doors. Suddenly, from the open entrance to the right come several wolves, bounding toward you with feral anticipation.

Coming toward the PCs are six wolves. These wolves rear on their hind legs as they attack. This is an attempt to sink their teeth into flesh or clothing and pull victims to the ground. Charging wolves receive a +2 bonus to hit; PCs struck by a charging wolf suffer bite damage and must make a successful Strength check or be knocked down. Once downed, a PC suffers the effects of fighting prone for the next round while regaining his feet. The wolves gain a +2 bonus to hit "prone" targets for that round.

Any time a wolf rolls a successful hit with a natural 19 or 20, it has clamped down with its teeth, holding the PC and automatically shaking him for standard bite damage the next round. A PC can break free of the wolf's hold by making a successful Strength check. Prone PCs who also have a wolf clamped down on them must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation to regain their feet. The round after the initial wolf attack round, six more wolves join the fray from the easternmost entrance of the Halls of Frost.

Howling winds mask all sounds of combat. None of the creatures residing in the complex are alerted to the PCs' presence, even if combat with the wolves lasts several rounds.

Wolves (12): AC 7; MV 18; HD 3; hp 20, 18, 17, 16, 15 (×2), 13 (×2), 12, 11 (×2), 10; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2–5; SZ S; ML 10; INT low (5); AL N; XP 120; *MM*/362.

As the PCs approach the cliff face, they see what remains of six stone golems reduced to rubble by the giants' attack. These golems used to stand on pedestals beside the entrances.

The entranceway to area **2** has had its doors set back into place. The doors have suffered the ravages of giant battering rams and years of exposure to the weather. The doors are barred from the inside. While the PCs can batter down the doors, this would draw the attention of the soldiers in area **4e**. Examination of the door reveals a cracked board that may be broken off, creating a hole big enough for the PCs to wiggle through.

The entrance to area **3** only has one door still attached to its hinges. Halfway across the 30' × 30' room atop the stairs, however, is a 9"-thick *wall of ice*. This *wall* was created by Inoke as a quick fix of the doorway.

The entrance to area **6** has a faint amount of torchlight spilling from it. Deep, rumbling laughter comes from the opening. It is possible for a PC to sneak close to the opening, using the wall as cover, and not be noticed. (Apply a +20% bonus to Move Silently and Hide in Shadows rolls.)

2. Entrance Hall. At one time the splendor of this room, with its polished floor, arched ceiling, and welcoming fireplace in the corner would dazzle even the most jaded courtiers. Now it is merely dark and still. PCs entering this room via the southern entrance must climb a short flight of stairs to reach the debris-strewn floor of the chamber.

The only visible light source emanates from the ramp in the northeastern corner of the room. Peering down the ramp reveals a lamp-lit room (area **7**), with the muffled sound of voices audible. A dark staircase in the middle of the western wall leads down to the main entrance hall (area **3**).

There are two statues in this room that somehow escaped the wrath of the invading giants, and a third lies broken on the floor. All three statues depict dwarves. Careful examination of the broken statue indicates there is a hollow space inside it. The two statues still standing have hidden compartments as well. The heads of the statues lift off, revealing a cylindrical space inside each one. One of the statues contains a quiver with eight *crossbow bolts +3*. The other contains three scrolls: *protection from cold*, *protection from white dragon's breath*, and *wall of fire* written at 12th-level of ability.

3. Great Hall. The only illumination in this room is the faint glow from the outside shining through the *wall of ice* that blocks the dilapidated entranceway. This is where the dwarves would lay out their wares and trade with human caravans. Tables, chairs, and display racks used to occupy this room, but they were all destroyed when the complex was conquered. The rubble has all been swept into the southwest corner of the room by Malachi's men.

This room currently houses two giant sleds. One is a huge vehicle similar to the sled described in "The Trail North" section. It is equipped with a heavy tent supported by a log frame. This is one of the shelters used by Malachi's men during their long journey with the giants. The second sled is a somewhat smaller version of the other without the tent. It is small enough for one giant to pull. The only thing left on the sleds are the ropes and wide blankets used to secure cargo. Faint torchlight emanates from the northern staircase that ascends to area **4**.

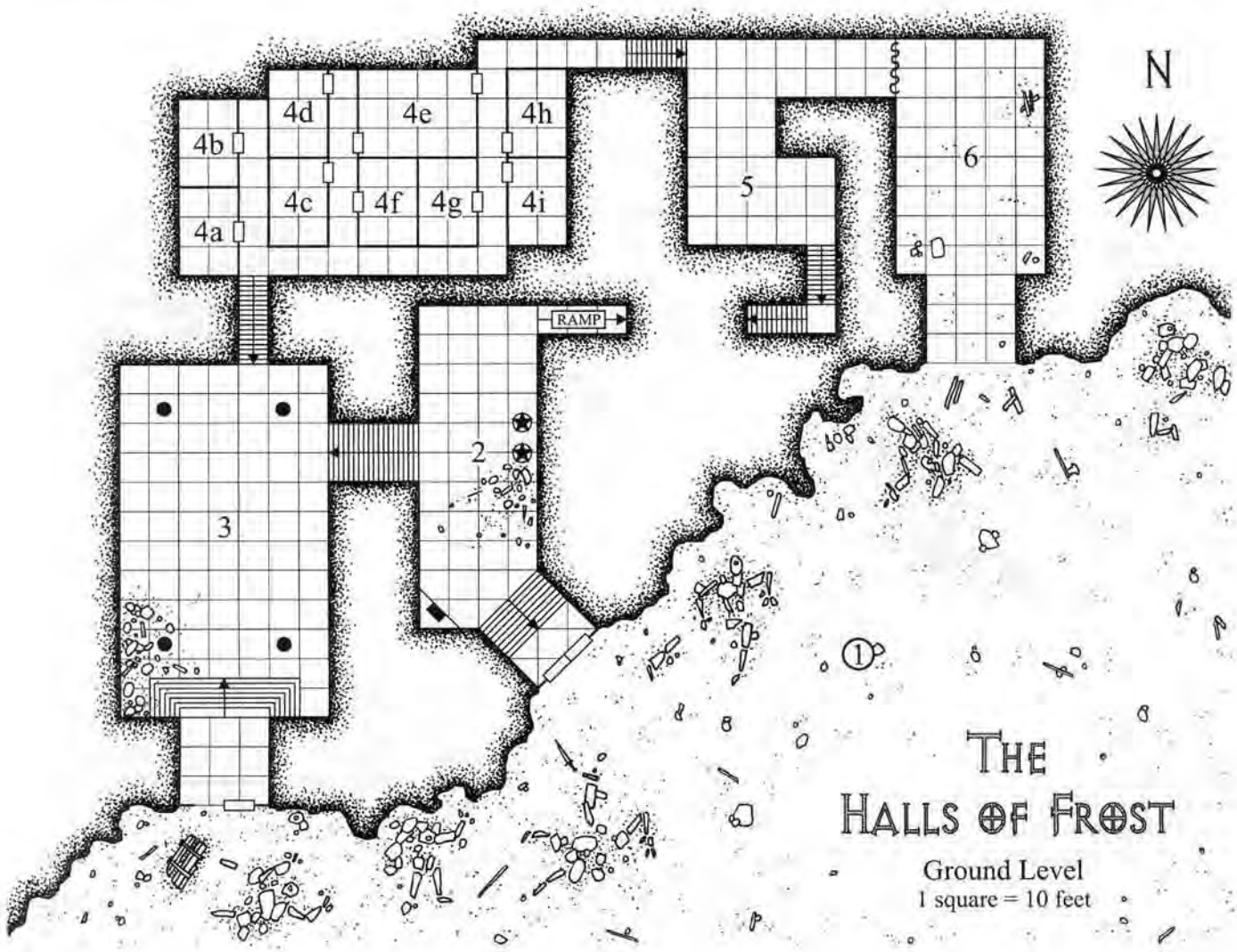
4a–i. Guest Quarters. These are guest rooms the dwarves would provide for caravans coming to trade with them. Malachi's men cleaned them out for use as barracks when more troops arrive. The rooms are essentially empty and swept clean. There is light coming from the hallway between areas **4c** and **4f**. In that hallway stand three men attired in matching studded leather armor. The light is coming from the door to area **4e**, which is standing open.

The men are talking, but the PCs cannot make out the conversation since the three are standing with their backs to the open passageway to the south. It is possible for a PC thief or ranger to slip past the guards; the action requires a successful Move Silently roll.

Soldiers, human males F1 (3): AC 10; MV 12; hp 8, 7, 6; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; AL LN; XP 15; longsword, dagger.

One of the three men is exceptionally quick-witted. If the PCs announce themselves instead of attacking, he tries to exploit the situation. He reaches just inside the door to area **4e** and brings out a torch. Then with a friendly smile on his face, he opens the door to area **4f** and motions the party inside. If they all go in, he slams the door closed and yells to the other two men for help. One stands with him and holds the door shut. The other man runs to area **5** and summons the ten hobgoblins to help.

If the PCs immediately attack the soldiers, they attempt to flee through area **4e**, slamming the door and toppling the items in the room onto the floor behind them to slow pursuit. They exit through



the door on the east side and flee to area **5**. If the fight goes badly for Malachi's troops, they try to summon help from the giants in area **6** or the other soldiers in area **8**.

Combat in area **4e** has a 1-in-10 chance per round of drawing the hobgoblins' attention if they have not been alerted. If the fight occurs in area **5**, there is a 1-in-4 chance the giants in area **6** hear the din above the howling wind outside. If the giants engage the PCs in the hallway between areas **5** and **6**, the giants can attack only one at a time. The others stand back with rocks poised to throw if they get an opportunity. All three giants can fight if they draw the PCs into areas **5** or **6**.

Area **4e** is where Malachi's men have gathered worthwhile items brought to the complex by Inoke's *charmed* yeti. Sleds loaded with blankets, ropes, rations, ale, wine, and weaponry occupy this room. There is nothing of extraordinary value here except a *battle-ax +1* of dwarven craftsmanship.

5. Hobgoblin Bivouac. This is the room chosen by the hobgoblins as their sleeping quarters. Furs and blankets make up their beds near a fire in the southwestern corner of the room. The hobgoblins are lounging around, talking about pillaging the villages in Northern Kaloria. They attack the PCs on sight. If the battle turns against them, they summon help either from the giants (area **6**) or the soldiers on the lower level (area **8**). Collectively the hobgoblins have 250 gp and 630 sp.

Hobgoblins (10): AC 5; MV 9; HD 1+1; hp 8 (×2), 6 (×3), 5, 4, 3 (×3); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 35; *MM*/191; chainmail, battle-ax or flail.

6. Giants' Quarters. A low wall of stacked stone has been started in the entrance of this room to the outside, but a lack of discipline and leadership on Malachi's part has allowed the project to go unfinished. The room is lit only with two oil burning lamps. The giants are resting and playing a game using bones for dice. They laugh heartily, punch each

Fierce wolves attack the heroes at the entrance to the Halls of Frost.

other in the arm, and take the "dice" away from one another. A thick, heavy curtain to block the wind separates this room from area **5**, since the giants prefer their sleeping quarters to be much colder than the hobgoblins can stand. Battling with the giants alerts everyone on the ground level.

Frost giants (3): AC 0; MV 12; HD 14+3; hp 68, 67, 56; THAC0 5; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8+9 (unarmed) or 2d8+9 (battle-ax); SA hurl boulders for 2d10 points of damage; SD impervious to cold: SZ H (21' tall); ML 14; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 7,000; *MM*/140.

Other than their huge battle-axes and "dice," the giants keep their belongings in huge leather sacks. Items worth noting include the following:

- A *helm of homecoming*. This small, horned helmet allows its wearer to sense what direction "home" is in, so long as this locale is on the same plane as the wearer when he tries to discern this information. If a *maze* spell is cast on the wearer of this *helm*, the length of time he is trapped is always calculated as if the wearer had an Intelligence of 18.
- An *outlaw's belt*. This wide, copper-studded leather belt grants its wearer and anything he carries on his person the benefits of a *nondetection* spell. Saving throws versus divination attempts are made as if the wearer were a 10th-level wizard. The belt also grants the user the ability to cast *pass without trace* once per day; the effect lasts 3 turns.
- 158 pp, 510 gp, and 2,488 sp.

Lower Level 1

7. Lower Level Entrance. This room is empty save for a pair of brass oil lamps mounted to the walls providing illumination. Through the northern door can be heard loud voices, laughter, and occasional music. Both of the doors leading to area **8** are closed but not locked.

8. Dwarves' Private Hall. This is the common area where the human soldiers congregate. The soldiers have opened a couple of kegs of ale and behave more like they are "on leave" at a tavern than on a mission to secure an outpost for a planned invasion. They are generally unarmed and out of their armor. A few have daggers. If the PCs burst in on these men, four of them engage in melee using daggers while the others scramble to grab their weapons from area **16**. Their return should be spread over 2 or 3 rounds to simulate the mass confusion caused by the PCs' surprise attack.

Soldiers, human males F1 (17): AC 10; MV 12; 9 (×2), 8 (×3), 7(×4), 6 (×6), 5 (×2); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; AL LN; XP 15; longsword, dagger.

Against the northern wall is a raised platform upon which sits a throne. The throne is nothing more than an ornate chair, where the head of the dwarven clan would sit and talk to his kinsmen. Examination of the dais has a 1-in-6 chance (2-in-6 for dwarves or elves) of revealing a small secret compartment. Within this compartment rests an iron key. This key fits the lock of the secret door in the kitchen (area **10**).

Flanking the door in the southeast corner are two life-sized granite statues depicting dwarves. Malachi's soldiers vandalized these statues by darkening

the eyes and teeth with lamp black. Otherwise, there is nothing peculiar about the statues.

9. Chapel. This room is unlit. Once used as a chapel by the dwarves, the room contains three statues similar to the two in area 8. Against the east wall is a narrow stone table upon which rests an empty, wrought-iron candelabra.

A stone door in the eastern corner of the northern wall opens into a roughly hewn tunnel leading down to area 17. Thirty feet down the tunnel are two life-sized statues of dwarves carved from granite, both in fine condition.

10. Kitchen. Soiled plates, food scraps, and empty wine flasks litter this messy chamber.

If the room is carefully searched, the hidden keyhole that opens a secret door on the north wall is found. The key that fits this locking mechanism can be found in the secret compartment of the dais in area 8. This secret door leads to a passage that opens into a small room. Rubble litters the floor of this secret room and completely blocks off the westward passage. From what is visible of the exit passage, it appears to be a downward sloping hall. Careful examination of the floor reveals four square recesses, each approximately 6 inches square and 8 inches deep. These recesses were mounting holes for a winch assembly used to haul carts of mined ore up the westward passage. The winch is no longer present.

The sloping passage is blocked for many yards due to an intentional collapse the dwarves triggered to safeguard their mines (in the event they had to abandon the upper levels of the complex). The DM might want to develop the area of the sealed mines for future adventures.

11. Forge. This room is unlit. The forges along the walls have been silent and cold for many years. The overturned anvils have not been rung nor even righted by Malachi's men. The bellows are rotted, and the remnants of the smithing tools are rusted and useless.

12. Armory. On either side of the passage the floor is raised one foot. On these platforms sit empty, stone weapon racks. The walls have sconces for torches every five feet. Hanging from the ceiling are wrought-iron wheels with dripping wax icicles from candles burnt long ago. All of the provisions for illumination must mean this was a show room. It would have been here that the dwarves displayed their finest work. However, the weapon racks have been stripped bare.

13. Malachi's Quarters. Malachi has made this room his private abode. In one corner rests a pile of furs large enough to serve as a bed.

Standing against the north wall is a chair and table cluttered with parchment and scroll cases. The sheets of parchment are pages of Malachi's log book. The log chronicles the journey north and General Ajani's search for the frost giants. It tells of the bargain Ajani struck with the Jarl. The giants knew of an abandoned dwarven stronghold to serve the Bythamaran soldiers as a tactical outpost. Malachi was chosen to lead a group of thirty men to prepare the complex and begin scouting the countryside. Along with the men came sixteen hobgoblin mercenaries. Five giants and a giantess witch named Inoke led Malachi's men through the tundra. The giants built special sleds on which the humans and hobgoblins could find shelter from the cold. Ajani stayed with the Jarl to supervise the building of enough sleds to bring an army across the icy wastes to the abandoned dwarven complex.

A large wooden chest is pushed under the table. This chest is locked and trapped. Malachi keeps the key for the chest in a concealed pocket inside the top of his boot. The chest is protected by a needle trap coated with deadly poison. Any PC injured by the needle suffers intense pain 2 rounds after being jabbed. A poisoned PC loses 1d6 hit points each round until death, or until a *neutralize poison* spell is cast. If the PCs open the chest, inside they find the following:

- A suit of human-sized *platemail +1*.
- A potion of *extra-healing*.
- A leather pouch with 200 pp in Kalorian currency.
- A nearly empty flask of injective poison (two doses remaining; onset time 1d4 rounds; causes dizziness and blurred vision, as well as a +3 penalty to the imbiber's AC and a –2 attack penalty; the effects of the poison last for 2–8 turns).

There is also a wrapped and bound package 3 feet long and a few inches wide, buried underneath all the other items in the trunk. Unwrapping the item reveals it to be an ornate shortsword with dwarven runes engraved on its blade. This is a *shortsword of giant slaying +2*, +3 versus any giant, giant-kin, ettin, ogre magi, or titan. The weapon inflicts double base damage (2d8+3 points total) against true giants.

14. Command Room. This room is empty save for a table in its center. Spread upon the table with its corners held down by stones and tankards is a tattered leather map. The map depicts Northern Kaloria, Nothenvell, Gamada, and Karlsfjord, plus other cities farther south. Also on the map, obviously added by another hand, are arrows and circles. The markings on the map indicate where General Ajani plans to stage armies for a preemptive strike on Kaloria's northern flank.

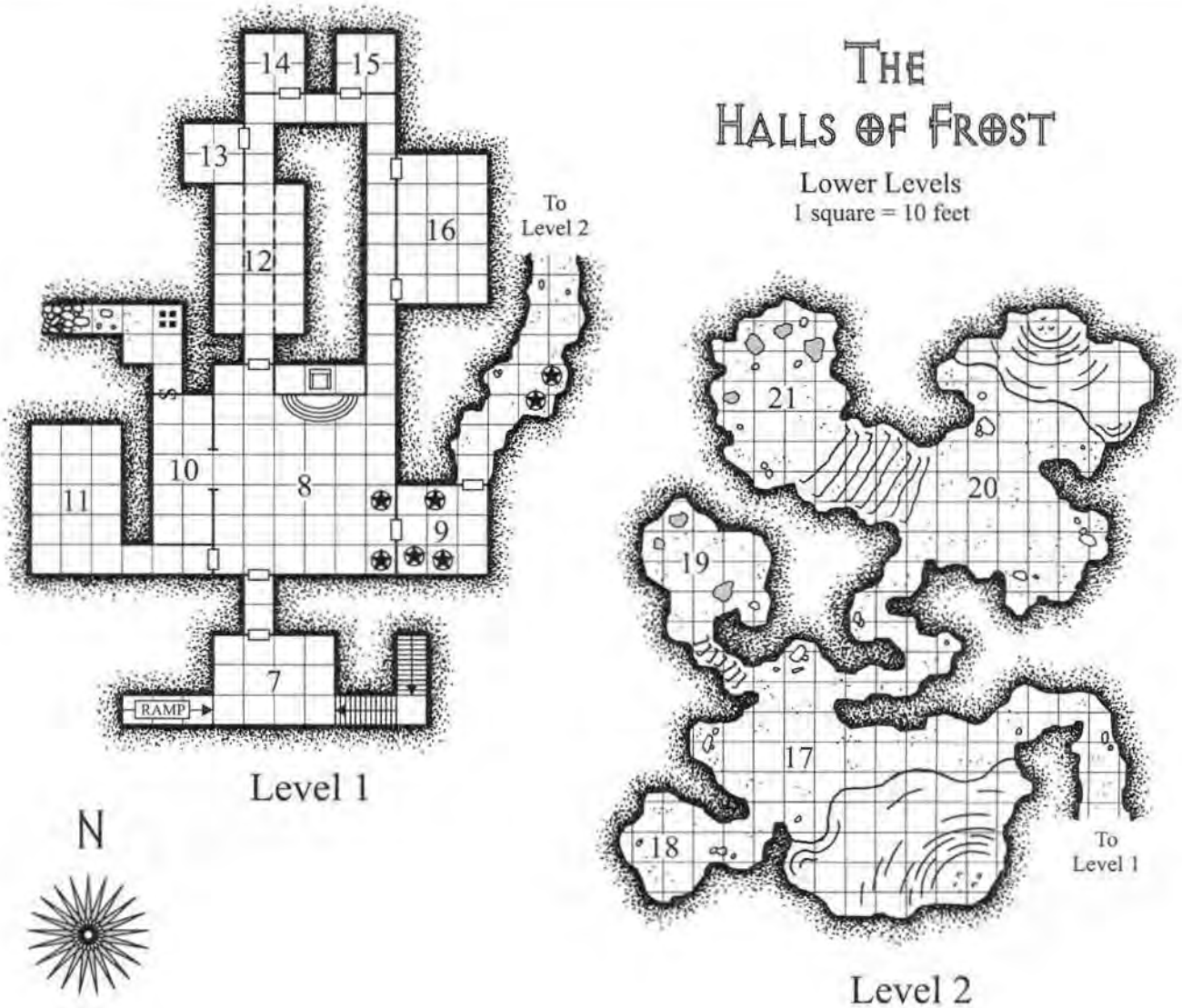
15. Ajani's Quarters. Malachi's men have furnished this private bedroom with the best of the furniture they could find in the complex. It is left empty for General Ajani's arrival.

16. Soldiers' Sleeping Quarters. This torchlit room is in terrible disarray. Some of Malachi's soldiers sleep on ramshackle cots, while others simply have bedrolls on the floor.

Searching this room reveals the mundane personal effects of the soldiers: cards, dice, clothing, along with a total of 127 gp, 42 sp and 73 cp. Also in the room are seventeen suits of matching studded leather armor.

Lower Level 2

These natural caverns were discovered by the dwarves while fashioning their complex. The passage from area 9 to area 17 is a sloping and winding path. The walls of these caverns are lined with a multitude of crystal formations that reflect light in brilliant ways. (PCs bearing light sources cannot surprise any of



this level's occupants.) The dwarves believed these caverns were sacred and would come here to meditate.

17. Antechamber. Nearly half of this cavern is filled by a milky white pool of water. Several streams of water travel down stalactites and drip into the pool below. At its deepest point, the pool is only 3 feet deep. Due to the white coloration of the water, it is impossible to see the bottom. Two small oil lamps sit on pedestals on opposite sides of the cavern. As soon as a PC approaches the opening to area **18**, the current inhabitant of that room attacks. On the second round after combat erupts, the current inhabitant of area **19** enters the fray.

18. Frostbite's Den. This small cave is the sleeping area of Inoke's pet winter wolf, Frostbite. From here he can see intruders as they enter and hear his mistress' call. Gnawed bones from his last reindeer kill are the only items in this area.

Frostbite (winter wolf): AC 5; MV 18; HD 6; hp 34; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2–8; SA frost breath; SZ L; ML 13; INT average (10); AL NE; XP 975, *MM*/362.

Frostbite is Inoke's cherished pet. She raised the wolf from birth, and it fights to the death to keep the PCs from advancing into Inoke's chamber (area **20**).

19. Ignacius' Cave. Inoke's loyal ogre henchman, Ignacius, claims this cave as his sleeping area.

Back home, Ignacius has a collection of skulls from various creatures he has killed. To keep from feeling homesick, he has gathered several of the dwarven skulls that once littered the complex and arranged them on the floor around the stalagmites. Some of the skulls are wearing battered helmets, while others are tied atop short sticks so Ignacius can use them like puppets.

Under one of the skulls, Ignacius has hidden his most prized possession: a large blue diamond worth 500 gp.

Ignacius (ogre): AC 0; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10 (unarmed) or 2d4+6 (bardiche); SZ L; ML 12; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 270; *MM*/272; piecemeal armor, bardiche, club.

20. The Ice Witch's Cave. As the PCs travel down the winding tunnel from area **17**, they encounter a cloud of thick white mist. Inoke casts an *obscurement* spell in this area when she hears fighting in the antechamber. The cloud fills the entire elbow-shaped area of the passage and extends 3 feet into Inoke's cave.

When the PCs step out of the *obscurement* into the witch's cave, they are immediately attacked by a yeti Inoke has *charmed*. Also in the room is a tall, dark-skinned, dark-haired warrior in a blue robe and boots. This is Malachi, and he has two weapons drawn—a dagger in his left hand and a longsword with flames playing along its blade in his right hand. Standing around Malachi are six attractive, 8'-tall, blue-skinned, white-haired giantesses clutching identical bastard swords. Only one of these giantesses is the real Inoke—the remaining five are *mirror images*. Inoke wears a scant, white fur dress. In addition to casting *mirror image*, she has also cast *protection from fire* on herself. Behind Malachi and Inoke, on the far side of the cave, is another milky white pool.

Malachi, human male F8: AC 5; MV 12; hp 65; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; Str 18/32 (+1/+3), Dex 16, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 15; ML 17; AL CN; XP 8,000; *boots of the north, longsword +2 (flame tongue)*, dagger coated with the poison detailed in area **13** (good for one successful strike), *ring of protection +3*, key to chest in area **13** (hidden in boot).

Inoke, half-frost giant female P6/W7: AC 2; MV 15; hp 51; THAC0 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+2 or by weapon type +2; SD immune to normal cold; +2 bonus to saving throws vs. magical cold-based attacks (granted by *Winter's Seed*); Str 18 (+1/+2), Dex 17, Con 17, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 16; SZ L (8' tall); ML 16; AL CE; XP 10,000; *Winter's Seed* (worn as amulet; see sidebar on next page), *bastard sword +1*.

Clerical spells (5/3/2): 1st—*cause fear, cure light wounds* (×3), *protection from good*; 2nd—*hold person, obscurement* (already cast), *warp wood*; 3rd—*cause blindness, protection from fire* (already cast).

Magical spells (4/3/2/1): 1st—*chill touch, magic missile* (×2), *reduce*; 2nd—*mirror image* (already cast), *shatter, strength*; 3rd—*dispel magic, protection from normal missiles*; 4th—*monster summoning II*.

Seven deadly foes dwell in the icy caverns beneath the Halls of Frost.

New Magical Item

Winter's Seed

This magical item is a 6"-long crystal shard roughly an inch in diameter. It glows with a dim blue light and radiates evil if detected for. The crystal is cold to the touch, and any non-evil character touching it suffers 2d4 points of cold damage each round he or she remains in contact with the shard.

Winter's Seed allows its possessor to cast the following spells each 1/day at 12th level of ability: *chill metal, wall of ice,* and *control weather*. Once per week, the possessor can summon a chraal (see adjacent page) from the Paraelemental Plane of Ice, but doing so causes a temporary loss of 1d4 points of Constitution; these lost points recover at a rate of 1 per day unless restored in a more timely fashion by some other means (such as a *restoration* spell). The chraal serves its summoner for 1d4+3 days before returning to its home plane. Only one chraal can be summoned at a time.

Winter's Seed also functions as a *ring of protection* +2 when worn or held. The +2 bonus applies to the wearer's Armor Class and saving throws vs. cold-based attacks only.

Finally, whoever possesses *Winter's Seed* has the power to control cold-based creatures as per the *charm monster* spell. Such creatures must have an Intelligence less than the possessor and are entitled to a saving throw to resist the *charm*. Like any *charm* spell, these creatures are favorably disposed toward the possessor, but they do not heed foolish or obviously suicidal commands. Commands that force a creature to act against its nature allows it to make another saving throw, with a +2 bonus. Inoke has used *Winter Seed*'s power to enslave the yeti in the area. Images of these creatures flash periodically on smooth facets of the crystal. Destroying the crystal undoes the *charm* and sets these creatures free.

XP Value: 4,000 **GP Value:** 12,000

Yeti: AC 6; MV 15; HD 4+4; hp 36; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1–6/1–6; SA squeeze; SD immune to normal cold; SW suffers double damage from fire-based attacks; SZ L; ML 13; INT average (8); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/368.

At the first opportunity, Inoke casts her *protection from normal missiles* spell, followed by her *monster summoning II* spell. The latter spell conjures 2d4 ice trolls that vanish when slain or after 10 rounds have expired.

Ice trolls (2d4): AC 8; MV 9; HD 2; hp 10 each; THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1–8/1–8; SD regenerate 2 hp/round; immune to cold-based attacks; magical weapons needed to hit; SW suffer double damage from fire-based attacks; SZ L; ML 11; INT average (9); AL N; XP 175; *MM*/349.

Malachi loves Inoke and fights to the death if Inoke is slain. If both the yeti and Malachi are slain, Inoke surrenders. If Malachi is reduced below half his hit points and Inoke has been wounded as well, he surrenders. He claims he can be ransomed since he is a officer and nobleman of Bythamar. Malachi also guarantees a ransom from his own fortune if Inoke's life is spared.

The pool is similar to the one in area **17** and holds nothing of value.

21. Inoke's Bedchamber. Among the stalagmites is a sled draped with furs and linens to make it usable as a bed. Tucked away under the furs is Inoke's spellbook. Her spellbook consists of several sheets of thin leather. These sheets roll into a tube that is tied together with a thong. The book contains all of Inoke's memorized spells plus the following: 1st—*detect magic, enlarge, read magic, shocking grasp, unseen servant*; 2nd—*deeppockets, invisibility, levitate, resist cold/fire*; 3rd—*fly, gust of wind, tongues*; 4th—*fear, ice storm*. Also hidden on the sled are 400 gp and a small leather bag containing ten cut gemstones worth 50 gp each.

Concluding the Adventure

Lenox's caravan makes it through to Karlsfjord, as the trail beyond the areas influenced by Inoke are relatively safe. Elgin is pleased with the PCs' actions and is eager to grant them a tract of land for their service. In light of new developments and given the PCs' knowledge of the area, the Crown might decide that a fortified keep close to the boundaries of the tundra is a good idea!

General Ajani's plot to conquer the northern lands must be revealed to Thane Elgin in Nothenvell so that he can alert the other thanes and prepare counter measures. Interpreting Ajani's battle map and Malachi's log are tasks better handled by military men in Nothenvell. Astute PCs might realize that some of Malachi's men are unaccounted for. Are these missing soldiers still scouting for an invasion, or have they fallen prey to greater threats on the tundra? Were Nothenvell to fall, the interior of Kaloria would be open to further attack. With most of the standing armies fighting on the southern front, mobilizing troops northward would be a daunting task, and PCs might be called upon to aid with Nothenvell's defense.

PCs should each receive 10,000 XP for exposing Ajani's plans and seeing the Lenox caravan safely to Karlsfjord. PCs should receive full experience for accepting Malachi's surrender and returning him to his family, with or without the ransom. If Malachi and Inoke are held for ransom, they try to escape (preferably while still on the tundra). If they are brought back to Nothenvell, Malachi cautions Inoke that their safest course of action is to wait until the ransom is paid. Malachi's family pays 2,000 gp for his safe return, and Malachi pays an equal sum for Inoke's safety. If Malachi and Inoke are killed, General Ajani or the frost giant Jarl demand bloody revenge.

If Ajani's plan to bring troops across the wastes is exposed and thwarted, the Coalition pleads for peace with Kaloria. The Coalition can no longer fund a war effort without emptying their coffers and leaving their subjects to fend for themselves. If Ajani is no longer called upon to marshal troops, he might set out as a mercenary to avenge his cousin's murder or disgrace.

PCs are free to explore the Halls of Frost, in particular the blocked corridor beyond area **10**. Perhaps there are valuable ores to be mined in the tunnels beneath the Halls of Frost. The coming summer might find the PCs back in those halls while more hospitable weather shines briefly on the northern lands. Ω

Chraal

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Paraelemental Plane of Ice
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Low (5–7)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	2
MOVEMENT:	15
HIT DICE:	8+8
THAC0:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2–12/2–12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Breath weapon
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Impervious to cold
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	L (8' tall)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17–18)
XP VALUE:	4,000

Illustration by Dimitri Patelis

When a particularly evil and hateful being perishes on the Paraelemental Plane of Ice, his life force is sometimes captured by the planar powers and coalesced into a chraal (pl. chraal). The chraal retains no knowledge of its past life and exists as a radiant cloud of cold energy trapped inside a monstrous shell of hard, bluish-black ice.

The hulking chraal stands 8 feet tall. Its head rests atop two broad shoulders, and its thick arms end in wicked claws strong enough to crush stone. The cold, radiant life force of the creature is visible through the eyes, mouth, and cracked joints of the chraal's frigid exostructure.

A chraal cannot speak or communicate in any way, but it has rudimentary intelligence and can be commanded to follow orders. (A *charm monster* spell is needed to maintain control of the creature, and care must be taken to ensure the *charm* is not dispelled, as the chraal is then 75% likely to turn on its controller.) A chraal is cruel and rapacious, relishing any chance to inflict harm on the living.

Combat: The chraal attacks with its sharp claws, causing 2–12 points of damage each. Once per turn, the chraal can breathe a *cone of cold* 60 feet long and 10 feet wide at the terminus. Those caught in the *cone of cold* suffer 8d4+8 points of damage; a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon reduces the damage by half.

The chraal is impervious to cold-based attacks, magical and nonmagical. Conversely, the chraal suffers double damage from magical fire-based attacks. When a chraal is slain, it explodes in a nonmagical wave of cold energy, inflicting 3–18 points of damage to all creatures within 20 feet; a successful saving throw vs. spell reduces the damage by half.

A single chraal may be summoned to the Prime Material Plane by means of a *monster summoning VII* spell or similar magic. Chraal have also been known to enter the Prime Material Plane via magical *gates*, although the creators of such portals exert no control over the disgruntled chraal and are readily attacked.

Chraal do not survive long in nonarctic climates. Warmth is anathema to them, and they suffer 1 point of damage per round in temperate climes and 2d4 points of damage per round in tropical or arid environments.

Although created from the life essence of a slain malevolent being, the chraal is not undead and cannot be turned.

Habitat/Society: Chraal are solitary creatures and do not intermingle or procreate. They do not generally attack one another and will sometimes combine their strength to defeat a common enemy before going their separate ways.

On the Paraelemental Plane of Ice, chraal normally dwell in icy cysts until they detect the presence of a living creature nearby, at which time they emerge and stalk their prey until it is slain or the chraal itself is destroyed.

Chraal summoned to the Prime Material Plane are often used as guardians and stalkers. A chraal that is not permitted to hunt and kill prey invariably turns against its summoner. Thus, they can be difficult to control without the aid of a *charm monster* spell.

Ecology: Chraal contribute little to their environment. They are tireless hunters and merciless killers. They are completely destroyed when slain, leaving nothing behind that can be salvaged or used to benefit their slayers.

Returning from his latest campaign, Lord Broden receives a warm homecoming.

CRUSADER

BY PETER LLOYD-LEE

Finagill's misfortune

Artwork by Mike Vilardi
Cartography by Diesel

Peter, a 35-year-old computer programmer living in Arizona, writes: "This is my first published adventure after nine rejections. I encourage would-be writers to persevere and not be disheartened if their first few attempts are not accepted."

"Crusader" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–6 good-aligned PCs of levels 3–6 (about 25 total levels). Higher-level PCs can still be challenged by the adventure provided they are not equipped with weapons of +3 enchantment or better. There should be at least one lawful PC in the party, although this is not essential. The module can be set in almost any city or large town in any reasonably magic-rich campaign world.

Adventure Background

The adventure can begin with the PCs arriving in town for supplies. If they live in town, they might already know the two major NPCs. This does not affect the plot in any way but may require minor alterations to some of the roleplaying encounters and boxed text. Either way, some or all of the PCs should be relaxing in a tavern on the town's main street just before dusk. The DM must arrange for them to have a window seat right next to the door. Read or paraphrase the following at this time:

> There is a slight commotion in the street. Looking out the window, you see an armored warrior ride past on a majestic white horse amid a throng of cheering children. He carries his lance pointed skyward, its bright orange banner flapping in the wind.
>
> A few minutes later, an old man with a walking stick and wearing a grey robe hurries past on foot, heading in the same direction. Suddenly, he stops, clutches his chest, and then falls over in the street.

If the PCs do not respond immediately, a young peasant named Silvia runs into the tavern shouting, "Someone, please help! Dear old Mr. Flanagin is dying." If no PC makes an immediate move toward the door, she tries to drag the nearest PC into the street. If this still does not get them moving, Mr. Flanagin

dies before anyone arrives, and the adventure is over. If the PCs are well-known heroes, word of their inaction quickly spreads throughout the city, thus ruining their reputation. The locals become uncooperative, and the PCs have trouble renting rooms or buying equipment. (All the inns suddenly become "fully booked," and important equipment is unavailable, very expensive, or "already sold.") The DM should seriously consider whether the PCs shift alignments, and certainly no paladin in the party remains so after such a blatant refusal to render assistance.

When the PCs head out to the street, read the following:

> By the time you arrive, several other townsfolk have gathered around the old man, who is sprawled in the street, clutching his chest, and gasping for breath. It is clear that no one has any idea how to help him. As you bend toward him, he blurts out "Lord Broden ... Crusader ... Sarathar ... Sarathar ..." and then dies.

For the Dungeon Master

The old man is (or rather *was*) Finagill Flanagin, an old mage who gave up adventuring some forty years ago when his heart began to weaken. Since then he has pursued a career in arcane research and manufacturing magical items to special order. His policy was to deal with anyone, regardless of race or outward appearance, provided their motives were honorable, they wanted an interesting or unusual item (i.e., no mundane *swords +1* or the like), and were able to pay the research costs.

The PCs can do little to save him. Although he was fairly fit in his prime, he is now over one hundred years old and has a Constitution of 3. If the PCs use a *raise dead* scroll or equivalent magical item, they should be given 1,000 XP for the attempt, but Finagill fails his Resurrection Survival check (no roll required) and cannot be revived.

The key to the adventure lies in Finagill's dying words. If the PCs didn't catch them the first time, Silvia or another bystander can repeat the words for them. A *speak with dead* spell cast on Finagill might also work.

Finagill's latest project was to enchant a special weapon for Lord Broden, the paladin who rode into town a few minutes ago. The work has been finished for a week, much earlier than expected, but Lord Broden has been out of town. Excited about completing his life's most ambitions project and seeing Lord Broden return, Finagill rushed out, hoping that the paladin would be delayed by a group of children (as he so often was when he returned). If Finagill could catch up, this would save him the long walk all the way to the other side of the city.

Finagill was probably the only 20th-level wizard with no "travel" spells. Early in his career, he fell victim to a *cursed ring of feather falling* (see "Cursed Items" sidebar for details) that nearly killed him. Terrified of heights, he refused to use *fly* spells. Even being six feet up on a horse was too much for the mage to bear. To make matters worse, he repeatedly failed to learn the *teleport* spell. Finagill was therefore forced to walk. This exertion is, ironically, what caused his demise.

Meeting Lord Broden

If the PCs are local residents, they already know where to find Lord Broden. However, the following text assumes that they are strangers.

Discussion with villagers easily yields Lord Broden's whereabouts. He lives at the far end of Stag Lane, in the low end of town (so called because of the sloping terrain on which the town is built). "His house doesn't have a number, but you can't miss it because it's the one with the flagpole," the PCs are told.

If the PCs want to take care of the wizard's body, they can do so, but the townsfolk would rather take him to the undertaker themselves. Silvia suggests that the PCs find Lord Broden immediately, as the wizard's final words might have been important. She knows the location of Lord Broden's house and agrees to accompany the PCs there if they so request. She is a 0-level human with 3 hit points, no useful skills, and no ability score above average. The DM can flesh out Silvia a bit more if desired, but she is not important to the adventure.

As the PCs approach the low end of town, they may think they have made a mistake, as it is definitely a poorer area. They do, however, find Stag Lane. As they proceed down the lane, the homes become smaller and rougher until they come to a tiny wooden shack with a bright orange banner flying from a tapered flagpole just behind it. This is the home of Lord Broden.

Lord Broden's shack is about 20 feet long and 10 feet wide, divided into two rooms. Its leaky roof is so low that Lord Broden regularly bangs his head on the beams. The living room has a plain dirt floor with several potholes caused by rainwater dripping through the roof. There is a single worn-out armchair propped up on a wooden crate where one of the legs has broken off, and a small fireplace that looks as though it hasn't been used in years. A large holy symbol is mounted on the wall above the fireplace. The bedroom has a sagging bed and a threadbare rug on the floor. A metal bucket catches rainwater from another serious leak in the roof. There are no curtains covering the window; instead, an old battered shield has been propped up against it to provide some measure of privacy.

Built onto the back of the shack is a 6'-square lean-to extension that serves as a kitchen. The kitchen contains a rickety wooden table with a large enameled basin on it. Also on the table, wrapped in a cloth, is half a loaf of stale bread and a slab of cheese.

Attached to the back wall of Lord Broden's shack is a bracket resembling an oversized torch sconce. When at home, Lord Broden stands his lance in here to serve as a flagpole. Just behind the shack is a single stable, about 10 feet square, in somewhat better condition. (Lord Broden spends slightly more money on his horse Silvermane than he does on himself.)

When Lord Broden arrives home, he spends about thirty minutes grooming and feeding Silvermane, then casts a *create water* spell in the kitchen basin, washes his face, and kneels before the holy symbol to offer a prayer to his deity before falling asleep in the armchair. He has not slept in almost a week and is

thoroughly exhausted. The DM should decide how far through this plan of action Lord Broden has gotten when the PCs arrive. If he is already asleep, nothing short of a slap in the face or a splash of cold water wakes him.

Lord Broden, human male Pal17: AC –6 (fully armored); MV 12; hp 116; THAC0 1; #AT 5/2; Dmg by weapon type (1d8+7 with *longsword* +2); Str 18/92 (+2/+5), Dex 10, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 17; SA turn undead as P14; SD +2 to all saving throws, *protection from evil* aura, immune to *fear* and disease; *cure disease* 4/week; lay on hands 1/day (heals 34 points of damage); AL LG; *field plate +4, shield +3, longsword* +2, potion of *storm giant strength, rod of resurrection* (9 charges remaining).

Lord Broden is an imposing man of 35 years. He stands 6'6" tall and weighs 240 lbs. He has piercing blue eyes and allows his blonde hair to grow long and wild. While most paladins tithe 10% of their wealth, Lord Broden gives away virtually all of it, living in near poverty. He loves children, and they love him. More often than not, whenever he rides through the city, he finds himself dismounting to spend half an hour or so telling stories with four or more young "wannabes" on his lap.

If the PCs go away without waking him, he sleeps for 1d6+12 hours and leaves town an hour after waking. The PCs will have missed useful information but can still complete the adventure by asking directions to the wizard's home. If this occurs, proceed with "The Home of Finagill Flanagin" section.

Assuming the PCs speak to Lord Broden about Finagill's death and mention the dying wizard's words, Lord Broden sighs and replies as follows:

> "Ah, poor Flanagin. He was such a nice fellow. Many will miss him, but the news comes as no surprise. He has lived long. Recently I offered him a potion of *longevity* that I was given, but he said it would do him no good—something about his extensive spell-casting rendering such potions inert.
>
> "He mentioned Crusader, you say. That is my sword which he was enchanting for me. Could it be that he's finished it? I was not expecting the work to be completed so soon. If that is the case, maybe you chaps would like to go and find it for me.
>
> "I'm afraid I have no idea what Sarathar means."

If any PC asks why he does not retrieve the sword himself, Lord Broden glares at the PC who asked the question and sounds a little irritated when he responds.

> "There's a marauding dragon less than a day's ride from here, a great clan of giants rather too close for comfort, and a restless graveyard to deal with. I cannot be in four places at once, and if I must choose, then Crusader will just have to wait."

If the PCs seem hesitant about rendering assistance and helping Lord Broden retrieve his sword, the paladin tries to further justify his request:

> "There is another reason why you would be better than me at finding Crusader. I am a warrior. I can deal with dragons and giants ... but when it comes to delving into the business of wizards, well, that is something I'm just not cut out for. While you retrieve Crusader, I can go and teach that red dragon a lesson! You should first visit the magistrate and get permission to enter the old man's home."

Lord Broden is serious about taking on the dragon single-handed. Several years ago, he unintentionally led a henchman to his death, and despite doing all that he could for the squire's family, he has never been able to ease his conscience. Ever since then, he has worked alone so that in the heat of a battle, he need only concentrate on his foes instead of worrying about what sort of trouble his allies are in.

Any offer by the PCs to help him fight the dragon is politely declined, and nothing the PCs say makes him change his mind. If they follow him anyway, it is unlikely that anyone can keep up with Silvermane. If they do, either Lord Broden could fail to locate the dragon's lair (it may have already moved on) or the PCs could have a near-death encounter with a very old red dragon. The dragon has set up a new lair in a cave but has not yet amassed any treasure. After casting *protection from fire* on himself, Lord Broden can withstand the first two breath attacks with hardly a mark on him and, with his potion of *storm giant strength*, should be able to cut the dragon to pieces in no time. On the other hand, one look at the 250'-long reptile should convince the PCs that they have no hope of survival if they insist on becoming involved.

Although the text assumes that Silvermane is simply a heavy warhorse of outstanding quality, there is no reason why it could not be something more unusual, such as a unicorn, pegasus, or trothspyre (as described in "Destriers of the Planes" in *DRAGON® Magazine* #243). Any of these creatures would make the PCs' pursuit of Lord Broden even more difficult.

The Home of Finagill Flanagin

Finagill Flanagin lived in a modest but comfortable home on a small side street near the city gate. It is not really necessary for the PCs to obtain formal permission to enter the home, but it will simplify matters should problems arise. If the PCs sneak in quietly via the back entrance, no one sees them, and if they walk boldly up to the front door, everyone assumes they have a legitimate reason to enter.

The house consists of just four rooms (living room, kitchen, and two bedrooms) with a small underground cellar. Searching the house should require no more than a couple of hours. The DM can go into as much or as little detail as desired. Other than the choice of clothing in the wardrobe, there are no indications that the former occupant was a wizard, and there are no secret doors to be found. To enter the secret workshop, a PC must speak the command word "Sarathar" while standing in Finagill's bedroom. This causes a magical portal to appear on one wall.

Once activated, the portal works like a normal door, granting access to the extradimensional space that contains

Finagill's library and workshop. This space has been created by means of an *extradimensional bubble* spell (described in the "New Spell" sidebar). All areas of the *bubble* are brightly lit by *continual light* spells. The walls are virtually indestructible and cannot be dispelled or breached by any magic save a *wish* spell.

1. Statue Room. This room has five exits including the entrance portal. Opposite the entrance, a row of five short levers juts out of the wall. Above the levers, a small niche in the wall contains an hourglass. Spaced around the curved wall are four 6'-tall stone statues bearing a striking resemblance to Finagill as he looked some 30 years ago.

The statues, hourglass, floor, ceiling, walls, and all five doors radiate magic if a *detect magic* spell is cast. The only nonmagical items in the room are the five levers, which are purely mechanical.

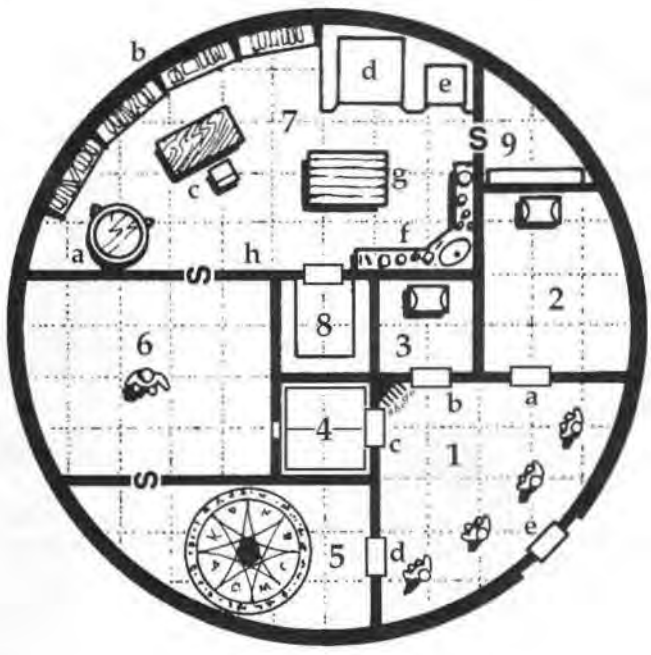
As soon as the outer door is released, it swings shut and locks, even if wedged. The five doors cannot be forced open by physical means or by magic other than a *wish* or *limited wish* spell. The floor, ceiling, walls, and doors are 100% magic resistant and impervious to physical attacks. Attacks against the statues have no effect except to tip the hourglass and start the timer. The hourglass can be smashed or removed from the niche easily, but this simply denies the PCs its use without stopping the timer. The levers can be bent or broken if PCs are determined to do so, although this action effectively traps them.

When the PCs first enter, the levers are all in the down position. To open any door, all five levers must be raised in the correct order. Lifting an incorrect lever delivers an electrical shock inflicting 1d6 points of damage, after which all five levers fall back to their start positions. Moving levers with an *unseen servant* spell or a wooden item (such as a club or quarterstaff) avoids the electric shock, but the levers still fall back to their start positions if an error is made.

The puzzle is easier than it seems. If the levers are lettered A to E from left to right, the thing to remember is that they must always be lifted alternately (i.e., lift one, skip one, lift one, skip one, ...). In other words:

The Home of Finagill Flanagin

One square = 5 feet



A must be followed by **C**
B must be followed by **D**
C must be followed by **E**
D must be followed by **A**
E must be followed by **B**

Touching any lever for the first time starts the two-minute timer and causes the hourglass to tip. Even if no lever is touched, the timer starts an hour after the PCs enter the room (and once every hour thereafter so long as the chamber is occupied by living beings—thus making it impossible to rest here).

This puzzle can be represented by placing a row of five dice on the table and asking the players to slide them an inch or so toward the DM as their characters lift the levers. Alternatively, the set-up can be represented by five sticks stuck into a lump of clay. This avoids any confusion over which levers are being moved and who should suffer the damage if a mistake is made. The DM should be generous and allow the players 5 minutes of real time to solve the puzzle, reporting on the sand's status regularly if a PC watches the hourglass.

As soon as all five levers are in the "up" position, a click can be heard by everyone as one of the doors is unlocked. Note that the door does not swing open, so PCs must try all the doors until the correct one is found. The unlocked door is the one lettered the same as the last lever to be raised. In other words, the sequences to open the doors are as follows:

Door **A**: **C, E, B, D, A**
Door **B**: **D, A, C, E, B**
Door **C**: **E, B, D, A, C**
Door **D**: **A, C, E, B, D**
Door **E** (exit door): **B, D, A, C, E**

A door remains unlocked for a single round. Once this time is up or as soon as the door is opened, the levers, timer, and lock all reset themselves automatically. Closing the door allows the puzzle to be

New Spell

Extradimensional Bubble
(Alteration, Conjuration)
Level: 8
Range: Touch
Components: V, S, M
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1 hour
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

By means of this spell, the wizard creates a spherical bubble of extradimensional space, entrance to which can be gained only at the place where the spell was cast. The maximum diameter of the *bubble* varies with the level of the caster, starting at 50 feet for a 16th-level caster and increasing by 5 feet per level. A smaller sphere can be created if desired.

Entry to the *bubble* is possible only after speaking the command word while standing within 10 feet of the entrance portal, after which the portal appears for exactly one minute before closing again. The portal can be opened as often as required. Leaving the *bubble* is possible at any time without speaking the command word, although this does not reveal the portal—the person leaving would seem to appear from nowhere. It is not possible to place any kind of warding magic on the portal to the *extradimensional bubble*. Only one entrance into the *bubble* can be created.

The spell lasts for 2d4 years + 1 year for every level of the caster above 16th. Upon termination of the spell, the *bubble* collapses and everything in it is expelled into a random plane. The *bubble* can be renewed to prevent such catastrophe by recasting the spell, which simply extends the duration of the existing spell by 2d4 years. The spell can be ended prematurely by the spell's caster or with the careful wording of a *wish* spell.

The material component for the spell is 10,000 gp worth of diamond dust. During casting, the outline of the desired opening must be traced with the diamond dust on a solid wall, floor, or ceiling.

worked again, after which another door can be opened. The side doors close by themselves after 10 minutes if left open, and door **D** can be reopened easily from the other side. (Doors **A**, **B**, and **C** require the puzzle to be worked again to release trapped PCs.)

If the time expires before the puzzle is solved, the four statues animate and attack. Nonmagical weapons inflict only half damage and must make a saving throw vs. crushing blow after each successful strike or break. (*Mending* spells can be used to repair broken weapons.) Magical weapons inflict full damage to the statues and do not break. Whatever type of weapon is used, the damage inflicted is not visible, and PCs must decide for themselves whether their attacks are having any effect on the statues. The statues are impervious to most spells, although a *disintegrate*, *stone to flesh*, or *transmute rock to mud* spell destroys one statue permanently while a carefully worded *wish* or *limited wish* can eliminate all four. A *stone shape* spell inflicts 1d12 points of damage to one statue. Statues reduced to 0 hp are not destroyed but instead return to their starting positions and take no further actions until reactivated, by which time they are at full hit points once more.

Finagill's statues (4): AC 3; MV 12; HD 5; hp 30 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8 (fist); SD nonmagical weapons inflict half damage; MR immune to all spells save *disintegrate*, *stone to flesh*, *stone shape*, *transmute rock to mud*, *limited wish*, and *wish*; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 650.

2. Chain Room. In the front half of this room, a chain with a wooden handle hangs six feet above the floor. On the back wall of the room are a crossed pair of two-handed swords. Beneath the swords is a large, plain, wooden chest.

Pulling the chain deactivates the trap in area **4**.

Anyone entering the rear half of the room causes the two-handed swords to animate and attack. The swords can be damaged only by magical weapons or spells that affect metal (including electrical attacks) and are destroyed permanently if reduced to 0 hp. They do not pursue PCs beyond the door, returning to their original position if everyone leaves the room. A *dispel magic* spell cast successfully against 20th-level magic renders the swords inanimate for 3d4 rounds; the swords cannot attack PCs protected by a *globe of invulnerability* or *anti-magic shell*.

The chest is locked (normal chances to Open Locks) and contains rocks.

Flying two-handed swords (2): AC 2; MV fly 12 (A); HD 2+2; hp 12 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10+1 (small or medium foes) or 3d6+1 (large foes); MR immune to all spells save those affecting metal; SZ M; ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 270.

3. False Treasure Room. This tiny room is empty except for a single large, iron-bound chest placed against the back wall. The chest is *wizard locked* at 20th level of ability.

Opening the chest releases a cloud of poisonous gas that fills the chamber. Every PC or living creature in the room must make a successful saving throw vs. poison or suffer 1d6 points of damage each round for 2d6 rounds. Damage can be forestalled by a *slow poison* spell or negated by a *neutralize poison* spell.

The chest contains 1,500 gold pieces (actually lead coins painted gold), a pair of 15"-tall gold figurines (actually lead painted gold, weighing 35 lbs. apiece), a leather purse containing thirty assorted gems (worthless cut glass), 1d4 cursed magical items (devised by the DM or chosen from the "Finagill's Failures" sidebar), and 200 lbs. of rocks beneath a false bottom. The total weight of the chest and contents is approximately 400 lbs. The chest does not have handles.

4. Pit Room. This room appears completely empty. A small, secret panel in the back wall hides a fist-sized spherical crystal that appears to change color as it is turned. This crystal sphere is the "key" to the workshop. Unfortunately, opening the panel causes the floor to split open, dumping anyone in the room into a 20' deep pit with a shallow pool of acid in the bottom. The pit doors remain open for 3 rounds before shutting; they can be held open with a *hold portal* spell.

PCs suffer 2d6 points of damage from the fall plus 2d6 points of damage from

the acid every round spent on the floor of the pit. Item saving throws are also required for everything the PCs are wearing or carrying. Pulling the chain in area **2** disarms this trap for 6 turns (1 hour). Alternatively, an *unseen servant* can be used to advantage once the secret panel has been located.

5. Glyph Room. The floor of this room is covered with magical runes. This is a *permanent glyph of warding* cast by an old adventuring companion of Finagill's. Anyone stepping on or jumping over this area sets off the *glyph*, suffering 10d4 points of electrical damage unless the password "Sarathar" is spoken first. (Everyone wanting to cross safely must speak the password.)

Casting *read magic* on the runes reveals the password, but not its usage. Flying or invisible characters trigger the *glyph* the same as anyone else, as do animals such as familiars (although once a wizard has spoken the password, her familiar can cross without ill effect). Creatures incapable of speech cannot cross the *glyph* safely at all. An *erase* spell or successful *dispel magic* (cast against 10th-level magic) neutralizes the *glyph* for 2d4 rounds, and a *wish* or *limited wish* spell dispels it permanently. Otherwise, the *glyph* resets itself immediately after being set off.

Dwarves and elves have a 2-in-6 chance of finding the secret door in the northern wall; other races have a 1-in-6 chance of finding the secret door.

6. The Fist of Iron. In the center of this otherwise empty room stands a fearsome guardian. It is a slightly modified iron golem, standing only 9 feet tall.

When the door from area **5** is opened, the golem holds out one hand, revealing a hemispherical indentation in its metal palm. If the "key" from area **4** is placed in the indentation, the golem stands aside, allowing the PCs to enter the workshop (area **7**). Otherwise it attacks, fighting until it or the party is destroyed or everyone leaves the room. Once everyone leaves the room, the golem places the "key" back in its secret compartment (in area **4**) from the rear of the niche. It does not attack PCs entering from the north unless they attack it first.

Brazen heroes confront Finagill Flanagin's dreaded iron golem.

It is highly improbable that the PCs have the means of defeating the golem, so they must obtain the "key." If the PCs enter this room without the key, a kind DM might adjust the damage from the golem's initial attack to ensure that the lead character is not killed without having a chance to retreat.

The secret door to the workshop is identical to the secret door in area **5**.

Iron golem: AC 3; MV 6; HD 18; hp 80; THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 3–30; SA breathe gas once every 7 rounds (10' × 10' × 10' cloud; acts as a *slow* spell lasting 2d4 rounds); SD +3 or better weapon to hit; immune to most spells; magical fire heals golem for 1 point of damage per die; SW electrical attacks *slow* golem for 3 rounds; SZ L (9' tall); ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 12,000; *MM*/166 (variant).

7. Workshop. This is Finagill's workshop and library—the room in which he spent most of the last thirty years of his life. The oddly shaped room is about 44' × 25' at its maximum dimensions.

The following is a summary of the most interesting features, although the DM should feel free to modify or embellish anything he desires. Note that there are a lot of potentially valuable items lying around, but most are rather awkward to carry. The DM must use his judgment in deciding how much the PCs can remove from the laboratory. (They can't walk off with Finagill's entire library, at least not all at once.)

7a. Scrying Mirror. This oval, 6'-tall mirror is mounted horizontally on a sturdy three-legged stand, appearing much like a table. An elaborate gold and platinum frame forms a slight lip around the mirror's edge, allowing it to be converted to a scrying pool with the addition of water. This nonmagical device is normally used in conjunction with powerful divination spells.

7b. Bookcases. These 6'-high bookcases stretch for almost 30 feet and contain hundreds of volumes. Although many are worthless discourses on subjects that interested Finagill, there are about fifty books concerning spell research or the manufacture of magical items. Each of these volumes is worth 1d6 × 100 gp to a high-level NPC wizard.

For every week a PC wizard spends studying these books, there is a 20% chance that he finds all the information required to learn a random spell, provided the spell is attainable at the wizard's current spellcasting level and subject to a "chance to learn spell" roll.

One particular shelf is cluttered with Finagill's notebooks. Reading through these notebooks (which takes several months) allows the PC to learn quite a lot about Finagill and might, at the DM's option, give a wizard PC a head-start when attempting to create certain minor magical items.

7c. Desk. Finagill's desk is a massive piece of furniture and detects as magical if tested. It is constructed of a rare magical wood almost as tough as iron. Beneath the 2"-thick top is built a cabinet with a pair of sliding doors.

The desk cabinet contains Finagill's master spellbook, but the doors are *wizard locked* at 20th level of ability. Hacking through the doors or side of the cabinet requires a sturdy ax and 100 points of damage. The wood is treated as AC 2, and whenever a natural 1 is rolled for the "attack," the ax must save vs. crushing blow or be destroyed.

Finagill's master spellbook is a huge volume about 2' square and 10" thick. It weighs about 30 lbs. and is unsuitable as a traveling spellbook. Its heavy wooden covers are clad with deep red leather embossed with gold trim. The pages are thick, cream-colored vellum. The book contains over 100 spells of 1st through 9th level (DM's choice, but no *levitate, fly,* or *teleport* spells). Finagill spent most of his time on magical research instead of adventuring, so his spellbook should reflect this by containing many rare or unique spells. One such spell (*extradimensional bubble*) is described in the "New Spell" sidebar. The DM could add other spells from various sources.

Finagill felt that his spellbook was adequately protected, so he did not bother to place any further traps within the book itself. It can be sold for 90,000 gp or traded for magical items of equal value, but finding a buyer might prove challenging.

7d. Decontamination Chamber. This 6'-square chamber has intricate runes around the entrance. Casting *read magic* on the runes indicates enchantments of *dispel magic* and *Finagill's disjunction*. This last spell is Finagill's own version of *Mordenkainen's disjunction*. The room was created as a safety measure in case a creation went horribly wrong. All Finagill had to do was throw the malfunctioning item into the chamber to destroy it.

Any potions and spell-like effects entering the chamber are automatically neutralized (no roll required), while permanent magical items become non-functional while in the chamber and have a 1% chance per round spent in this area of permanently losing their enchantment.

The decontamination chamber is an integral part of the laboratory and cannot be removed by any means short of a *wish* spell.

7e. Enchantment Booth. This booth resembles the decontamination chamber except that it is only 4' square and has a waist-high shelf built into it. Casting *read magic* on the runes around the doorway indicates enchantments of *enchant an item* and *permanency*. The booth was built to ease the process of magical item construction. Instead of having to keep casting these spells, Finagill simply placed an item on the shelf for 1d6 months. Activating the *enchant an item* power requires several command words, which Finagill took to the grave. A *legend lore* or *divination* spell has a 10% chance + 1% per caster level of revealing the command words, or the PCs could cast a *speak with dead* spell on Finagill's corpse and ask him.

The enchantment booth is an integral part of the laboratory and cannot be removed by any means short of a *wish*.

7f. Alchemical Bench. This L-shaped bench is covered with alchemical equipment. Scrawled on a chalkboard behind the bench are numerous formulas that no one but Finagill can decipher. The glassware is fragile, and PCs must take great care when transporting it. Some of the flasks contain unlabeled, foul-smelling liquids, most of which are toxic if consumed. There are no completed potions in this area.

Behind the sink in the corner is a large copper jug—actually a modified *decanter of endless water*. It can produce up to one hundred gallons of water per day. The water can be retrieved in any amount and may be any temperature from just above freezing to just below boiling. It also has the ability to destroy water poured into it (also up to one hundred gallons per day). Finagill used it for washing, making tea, and filling the scrying device (area **7a**).

7g. Work Table. This sturdy, wooden table is where Finagill constructed his magical items. Having completed his recent commissions, he had cleared the table pending his next project.

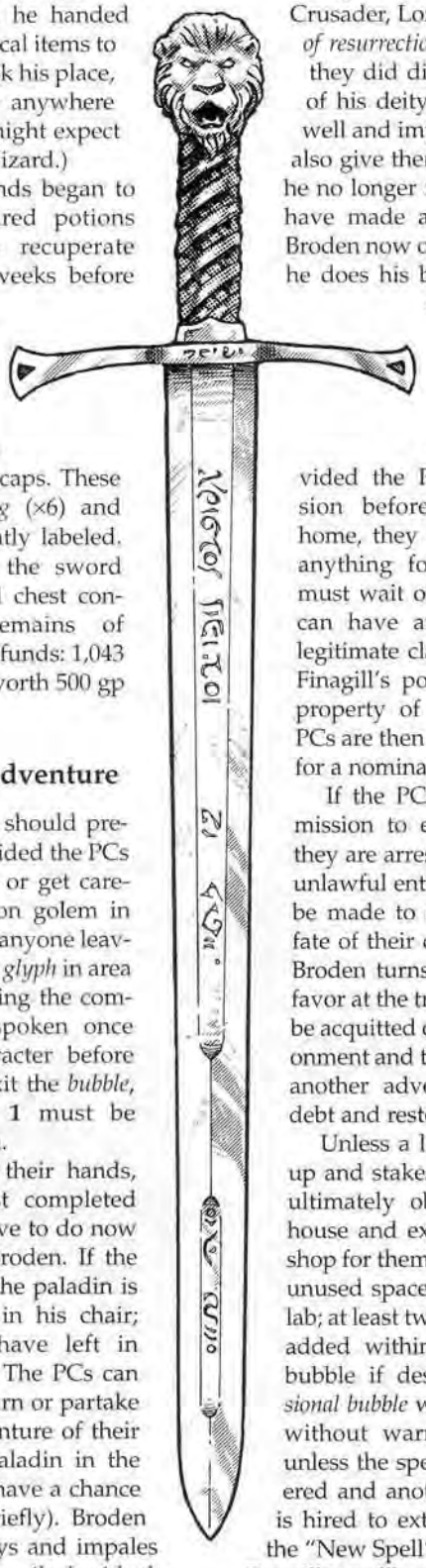
7h. Starchart. Covering this wall from floor to ceiling is a chart of the known galaxy. Any PC with the Astrology proficiency will enjoy studying the chart. The DM may, at his discretion, allow careful study of the chart to reveal any information he sees fit.

8. Store Room. This room is lined from floor to ceiling with shelves. Finagill was slightly disorganized but had an extremely good memory. He never bothered to label anything, and most of the contents are unrecognizable to the PCs, although a thorough search reveals the material components required to cast all of Finagill's known spells. PCs searching the shelves for the components to a particular spell have a 50% chance of eventually finding them, minus 5% for each spell level above 1st-level. (For example, there is a 45% chance of finding the material components for any 2nd-level spell, a 40% chance for 3rd-level spells, and so forth.)

9. Vault. Shelves line the south wall of this tiny, triangular room. This is where Finagill kept his valuables and newly completed projects; however, most of the

shelves are currently bare. (When he gave up adventuring, he handed down most of his magical items to the apprentice who took his place, so he does not have anywhere near as many as one might expect for such a high-level wizard.)

When Finagill's funds began to wane, he manufactured potions between projects to recuperate spent funds. In the weeks before beginning work on Crusader, the wizard created twelve potions. These are stored atop a high shelf in small potion bottles with screw-on caps. These are potions of *healing* (×6) and *invisibility* (×6), all neatly labeled. On another shelf is the sword Crusader and a small chest containing all that remains of Finagill's adventuring funds: 1,043 gp and six cut gems (worth 500 gp each).



Completing the Adventure

Leaving Finagill's lair should present no problems provided the PCs don't forget the route or get careless. Note that the iron golem in area **6** does not bother anyone leaving the workshop. The *glyph* in area **5** is still active, requiring the command word to be spoken once again by every character before crossing. Finally, to exit the *bubble*, the puzzle in area **1** must be worked through again.

With Crusader in their hands, the PCs have almost completed their goal. All they have to do now is return it to Lord Broden. If the PCs wasted no time, the paladin is probably still asleep in his chair; otherwise, he will have left in search of the dragon. The PCs can either wait for his return or partake in another short adventure of their own. (If there is a paladin in the party, he might even have a chance to wield Crusader briefly). Broden returns after three days and impales the dragon's head on a spike beside the city gate.

If any PCs died while obtaining Crusader, Lord Broden uses his *rod of resurrection* on them. (After all, they did die while in the service of his deity.) If the PCs behaved well and impressed him, he might also give them his *longsword* +2, as he no longer needs it. The PCs will have made a powerful ally. Lord Broden now owes them a favor, and he does his best to fulfill any reasonable request.

Finagill has no known relatives or apprentices and no will. Under the laws of the city, provided the PCs obtained permission before entering Finagill's home, they can stake a claim for anything found. However, they must wait one month before they can have anything. If no other legitimate claims are forthcoming, Finagill's possessions become the property of the Crown, and the PCs are then able to purchase them for a nominal amount.

If the PCs did not obtain permission to enter Finagill's home, they are arrested and charged with unlawful entry. The players should be made to sweat a bit about the fate of their characters before Lord Broden turns up to testify in their favor at the trial. The PCs can either be acquitted or sentenced to imprisonment and then offered a deal (i.e., another adventure) to clear their debt and restore their good names.

Unless a long-lost relative turns up and stakes a claim, the PCs can ultimately obtain Finagill's small house and extradimensional workshop for themselves. There is a lot of unused space above and below the lab; at least two more levels could be added within the confines of the bubble if desired. The *extradimensional bubble* will, of course, collapse without warning in a few years unless the spell is somehow discovered and another high-level wizard is hired to extend its duration. (See the "New Spell" sidebar for details.) Finagill's spellbook (if the PCs were able

Crusader

Crusader is a plain-looking broadsword with a handsomely sculpted lion's head pommel. This appearance is deceptive, however, as it contains great power. The sword is not a *holy avenger*, but it does have several exceptional features.

The blade is made of solid mithril silver. It never requires sharpening and does not rust, tarnish, break, or bend. Its alignment is lawful good, and it has an Intelligence of 15 and an Ego of 8. Any evil creature touching the hilt or pommel suffers 2d6 points of damage each round, no saving throw. Furthermore, it cannot easily harm creatures of good alignment. If a good-aligned creature is attacked with Crusader, knowingly or otherwise, the sword hits only on a natural 20 and inflicts only 1d4 points of damage plus the wielder's Strength bonus.

When wielded by anyone other than a paladin, it performs as a *broadsword* +2. In the hands of a paladin, however, it becomes a +5 weapon with the following special abilities:

- It inflicts an additional 2d4 points of damage per hit on chaotic evil creatures.
- The sword's wielder and any other lawful good creatures within fifty feet of the blade gain a +2 bonus to all saving throws.
- It grants the wielder 10% magic resistance. This is cumulative with other sources of magic resistance.
- If the paladin uses the sword while mounted, the mount also gains the +2 bonus to saving throws, as well as 10% magic resistance.
- It can be made to glow with light equivalent to a *continual light* spell with a 60' radius, or any lesser amount of illumination desired by the wielder.
- Twice per day, it can cast *dispel magic* at 20th level of ability.
- If inadvertently dropped during combat, it leaps straight back into the paladin's hand (upon command) the following round.

XP Value: 10,000 **GP Value:** 75,000

Finagill's Failures

Needless to say, any wizard who makes a career out of manufacturing rare magical items to order will have his fair share of failures, resulting in a selection of cursed items. Here are some that the PCs might find during their exploration of Finagill's lair (specifically in the chest in area 3). The DM should feel free to modify them or add others:

Ring of feather falling: This item appears to be the real thing, but every time it is used, there is a cumulative 20% chance of a malfunction. Instead of slowing a fall to a safe speed, the rate of acceleration is increased. In game terms, falling damage is 1d10 per 10 feet fallen, up to a maximum of 20d10 damage per fall. Once the malfunction has occurred, the chance returns to 20% for the next fall. Unlike most cursed magical items, it can be removed or discarded easily at any time.

Girdle of hill giant strength: This item actually gives the wearer the strength of a hill giant; however, it also *polymorphs* the wearer into a hill giant. Only the *girdle* itself enlarges with the wearer; all other equipment remains the same size. Any clothing or armor worn (including magical armor and *bracers of defense*) is destroyed during the transformation. Straps on shields and backpacks are broken but can be mended, and broken suits of armor can be repaired with a successful Armorer proficiency check. All other equipment is unaffected.

While in giant form, the 15' tall character experiences endless problems (the first being to fashion some makeshift clothing). The wearer has a natural AC of 7, an initiative modifier of +9, and suffers weapon damage as a large creature. Dexterity is reduced by 4, to a minimum score of 3. Thief skills cannot be used, and spells with material components have a minimum casting time of 2 rounds as the huge, clumsy fingers fumble about with undersized components. The giant must consume at least five times as much food and water as a normal person to remain in good health. Most normal weapons are unusable, although a suitable giant-sized club (weighing 30–50 lbs.) allows the giant to inflict the normal damage for a hill giant. (Nonproficiency penalties may apply.) Most indoor areas will force the giant to move and fight on his hands and knees (at a severe penalty). See the *DMG* for other problems likely to be encountered by the giant PC.

Dart of the hornet's nest: This is a *dart* +3 that splits into 2d4 *darts* when thrown. Unfortunately, the *darts* then curve back and attack the thrower. The first time this occurs, surprise is automatic, allowing an additional +1 bonus to hit and negating any Dexterity modifiers. The thrower must make separate attack rolls against himself for each *dart* that appears. Unlike the normal item, the cursed version does not disappear when used; it is a permanent magical item.

Glove of missile snaring: This appears to be the standard item as described in the *DMG*; however, every time the wearer tries to catch a missile with the gloves, he is struck automatically (no attack roll required).

When catching a blunt missile (such as a sling bullet), the hand is stunned and unusable for 1 round per point of damage inflicted. When catching a pointed missile (arrow, javelin, etc.), the hand is impaled. Until the missile is removed and the wound healed, all attacks made with that hand suffer a –2 penalty (two-handed attacks suffer a –1 penalty). Thief skills that require use of the hand (Pick Pockets, Open Locks, Climb Walls) suffer a –10% penalty, and spells with somatic components have a 10% chance of being miscast and foiled. Worse still, if the wearer happens to be standing in front of an object that could be pierced by the missile (a wooden crate or door for example), the wearer may be pinned to the object (10% chance per point of damage inflicted).

to obtain it) should keep the PC wizards happy for the foreseeable future, or alternatively, it could be sold to a high-level wizard elsewhere. This last alternative may seem inviting but could be more trouble than it's worth. The PCs would have to advertise it, gaining a lot of publicity in the progress. There are likely to be several wizards interested in the book, but some of them would rather steal it (or hire someone else to do so) than buy it. Thieves' guilds might want to get in on the act with a view to making a quick profit. Before long, the PCs might wish they had kept quiet about it.

For successfully returning Crusader to Lord Broden, the PCs should be awarded the full value of Finagill's guardians as a story award (15,140 XP), whether or not they actually fought them.

There are other possible spin-offs from this one short adventure. Maybe the PCs must relinquish their claim to Finagill's property to someone who claims to be Finagill's grandson or granddaughter, but who is later identified as an impostor. The impostor does not even have to be human (a rakshasa, a *polymorphed* dragon, or some other greedy creature). Once the true identity of the person or creature becomes known, the PCs might have to defend their claim against this villain and the villain's servants or hired henchmen.

In addition to the ornery red dragon, Lord Broden mentioned problems with a "great clan of giants" and a "restless graveyard." The PCs could undertake the task of eliminating these threats in Lord Broden's stead, with or without the paladin's blessing. Ω

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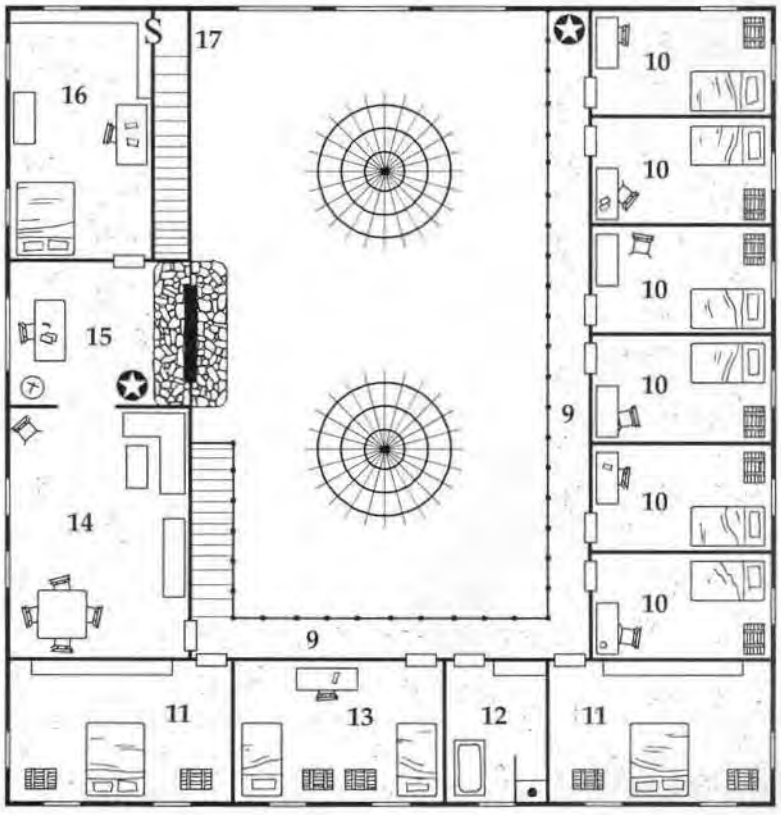
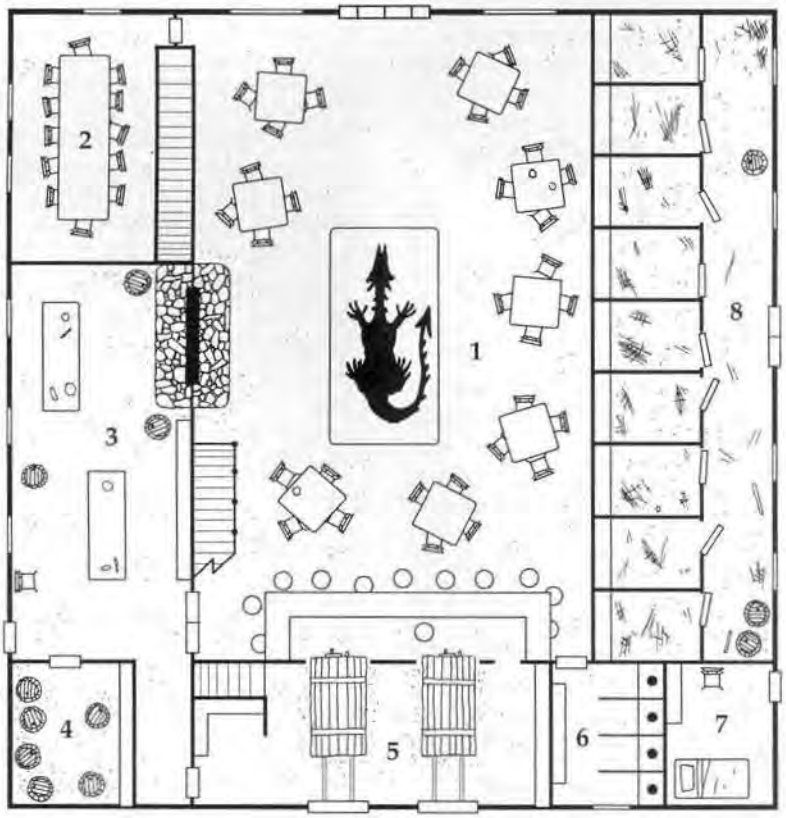
Maps of Mystery

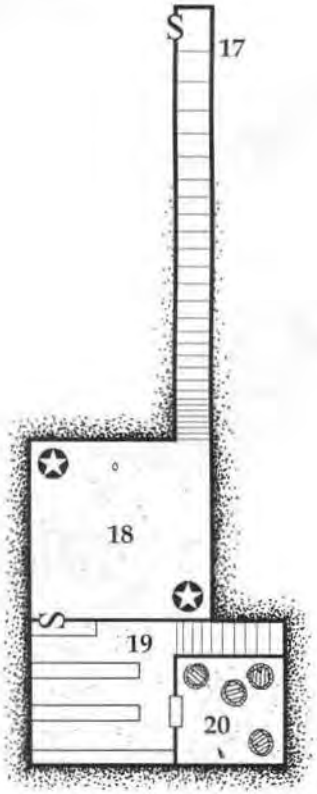


Key to the Inn

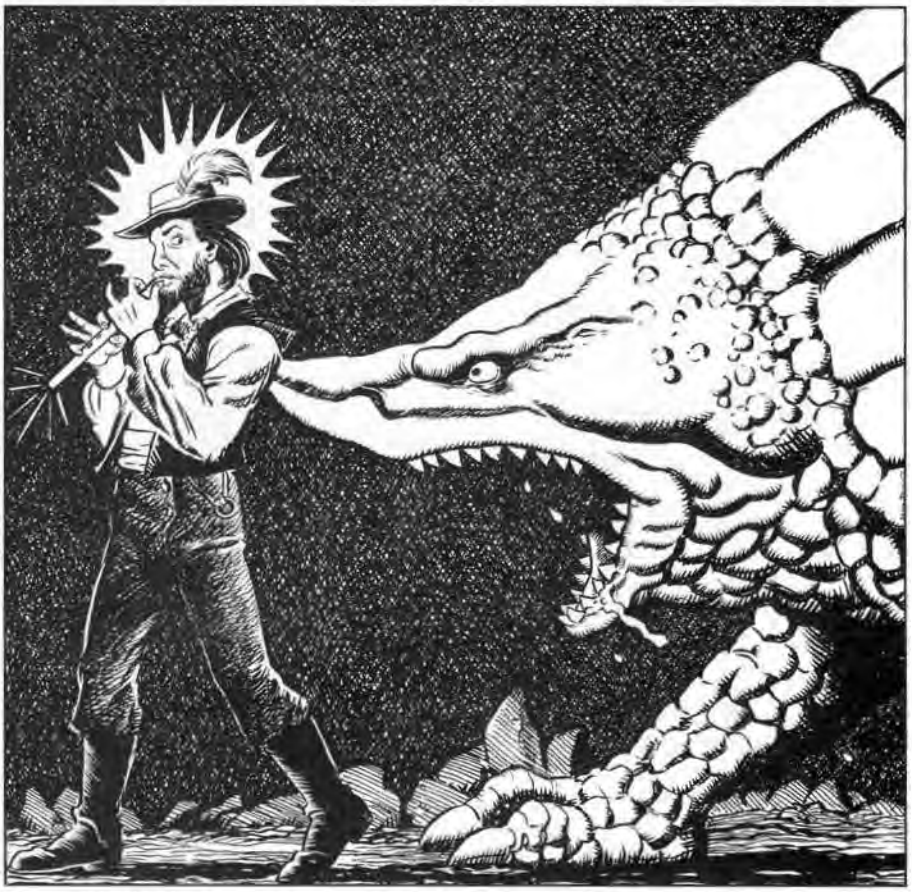
1. Tavern with Dragon Statue
2. Private Dining Room
3. Kitchen
4. Keg Storage
5. Ale Tuns
6. Privies
7. Stablehand's Room
8. Stablehouse
9. Balcony
10. Guest Room
11. Deluxe Guest Room
12. Bathroom
13. Double Guest Room
14. Meeting Room
15. Innkeeper's Office
16. Innkeeper's Bedroom
17. Secret Staircase
18. Secret Room
19. Wine Cellar
20. Cold Storage

Front Entrance





Map Design by Wayne Felske
Cartography by Craig Zipse



A musician's playful tune becomes a bulette's sweet dinner music.

EARTH TONES

BY CRAIG SHACKLETON

Shake, rattle, and roll

Artwork by Terry Dykstra
Cartography by Diesel

Craig originally estimated "Earth Tones" would be about 10,000 words. He was surprised when it reached 20,000 and was told to reduce it by 8,000 words. He would have happily written 20,000 more.

"Earth Tones" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–7 PCs of levels 7–9 (about 48 total levels). Although no particular character types are essential to complete the scenario, a dwarf would be useful.

The adventure is set in the vicinity of Blue Rock, the largest settlement in an agricultural region ruled by Baron Taigel. The DM may replace Blue Rock with a town from his or her own campaign.

An abandoned dwarven stead was recently discovered near Blue Rock. The adventure begins when the baron's daughter, Lady Anwyn, announces that she is hiring adventurers to explore the dwarven stead.

For the Player Characters

This scenario assumes that the PCs are heading to Blue Rock in search of adventure. The DM should feel free to devise some other reason for the PCs' journey; perhaps they wish to consult with a sage who resides in Blue Rock, or perhaps they are merely passing though on the way to some other destination.

> Two days ago, you overheard an official proclamation stating that Lady Anwyn "the Fearless" of Blue Rock is hiring explorers, torchbearers, and scholars to help her explore an abandoned dwarven stead northeast of the town. You've heard that Blue Rock is a quaint burg comprised mostly of farmers. There can't be many experienced adventurers in a farming town, apart from the legendary Lady Anwyn. So here you are, on your way to Blue Rock, with nothing but fields and hills all around.

For the Dungeon Master

Five days ago, Lady Anwyn's expedition completed its preliminary exploration of the dwarven stead and returned laden with treasure. Not all is well, however. The original expedition consisted of

Lady Anwyn and the five "Heroes of Blue Rock," consisting of Balric Two-Sword, Elise Thatcher, Aaron Hardy, Janos Wheelwright, and Donal Whetstone. They were joined by Davel Larzancen, a wizard and advisor to the baron, and Tom Haycorn, a local bard. The party split up soon after entering the stead, as there appeared to be little danger. Tom was assigned to carry Lady Anwyn's lantern.

Lady Anwyn claimed the stead and its contents for her father, promising to reward the others from whatever was found. During the search, Davel discovered a *jade flute*, a magical item of unknown power. Davel wanted the *flute* but was not willing to steal it. Although his loyalty to the baron stopped him from committing outright theft, he was not above a bit of trickery to get what he wanted. He cast a *nondetection* spell on the *flute*, hoping that if it appeared nonmagical, he could claim it as his share of the treasure.

Meanwhile, Lady Anwyn and Tom encountered a phantom. Lady Anwyn was uncharacteristically overcome by fear and fled, but Tom managed to stand his ground. He took a belt from the room, then went to reassure Lady Anwyn. She asked Tom not to tell anyone that she had fled, and he agreed. Lady Anwyn was grateful to Tom for keeping his word and impressed by the bard's valor. She became quite smitten with him.

When everyone regrouped, they put together all the treasure they had found, and Elise Thatcher (a cleric) cast a *detect magic* spell. Before Davel could ask for the "nonmagical" *flute* as his reward, Lady Anwyn presented it to Tom Haycorn as a token of her affection. The flattered bard eagerly accepted the gift, much to Davel's chagrin.

A skilled musician, Tom has been practicing with the *jade flute*, oblivious to its magical nature. In so doing, he has unknowingly summoned several burrowing monsters, which are magically drawn by the *flute*'s pleasing tones.

The burrowing beasts are only part of Blue Rock's worries. Several duergar are in Blue Rock, claiming to be the rightful owners of the stead. Their clan has sought the stead for generations and sent the delegation once rumors of Lady Anwyn's expedition reached them. The duergar disguise themselves as dwarves by drinking potions of *rainbow hues*. The PCs need to unravel this mess and deal with the duergar, exploring both Blue Rock and the stead.

The adventure begins when the PCs are a day's ride from Blue Rock. If they are not approaching the town by the West Road, place area **1** on their route one day's travel from town.

Blue Rock and Environs

1. Ploughman Farm.

> It is late afternoon. North of the road are wood fences, fields of crops, farmhouses, and forests. To the south meanders the Clay River, beyond which the landscape transforms into rough hills.
>
> Suddenly you hear screams followed by angry shouts. Up ahead, three farmers hold two huge, insectlike creatures at bay with pitchforks. Several children cower in fear behind the men. Five more of the monsters burst up from the ground in the middle of a nearby field of cattle.

The creatures are ankhegs, two adults and five juveniles. The young ankhegs each kill one cow per round; when all twenty-two of the cattle are dead, they attack the nearest human. If they are attacked, they turn to fight their attacker. The adults face any PC who engages them in melee but ignore missile attacks. None of the ankhegs uses its acid squirt attack unless it is reduced to fewer than half of its starting hit points.

The farmers defend the children to the death. After 2 rounds, two women charge out of the farmhouse to assist the men. If the PCs engage the ankhegs, the women herd the children into the house and guard the door.

Jon Ploughman, human male F4 (militia sergeant): AC 8; MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 13; ML 16; AL LG; XP 120; pitchfork, footman's flail (in house).

Wes and **Bran, human males F2** (farm hands and militia-men): AC 10; MV 12; hp 14, 11; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength bonus); Str 16, roll 2d4+6 for other abilities; ML 14; AL LG; XP 35; pitchfork, knife.

Elie (Jon's wife) and **Jane Ploughman** (Jon's eldest daughter), **0-level human females**: AC 10; MV 12; hp 4, 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 13; AL LG; XP 7; knife.

Children, 0-level humans (4): AC 10; MV 12; hp 1 each; THAC0 20; #AT nil; Dmg nil; ML 9; AL LG; unarmed.

Ankheg adults (2): AC 2 (underside 4); MV 12, burrow 6; HD 8; hp 52, 43; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6 (crush) + 1d4 (acid); SA squirt acid (8d4 points of damage); SZ L (20' long); ML 9; INT non (0); AL N; XP 975; *MM*/7.

Ankheg juveniles (5): AC 2 (underside 4); MV 12, burrow 6; HD 4; hp 25, 21, 18, 15, 14; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6 (crush) + 1d4 (acid); SA squirt acid (8d4 points of damage); SZ L (12' long); ML 9; INT non (0); AL N; XP 270; *MM*/7.

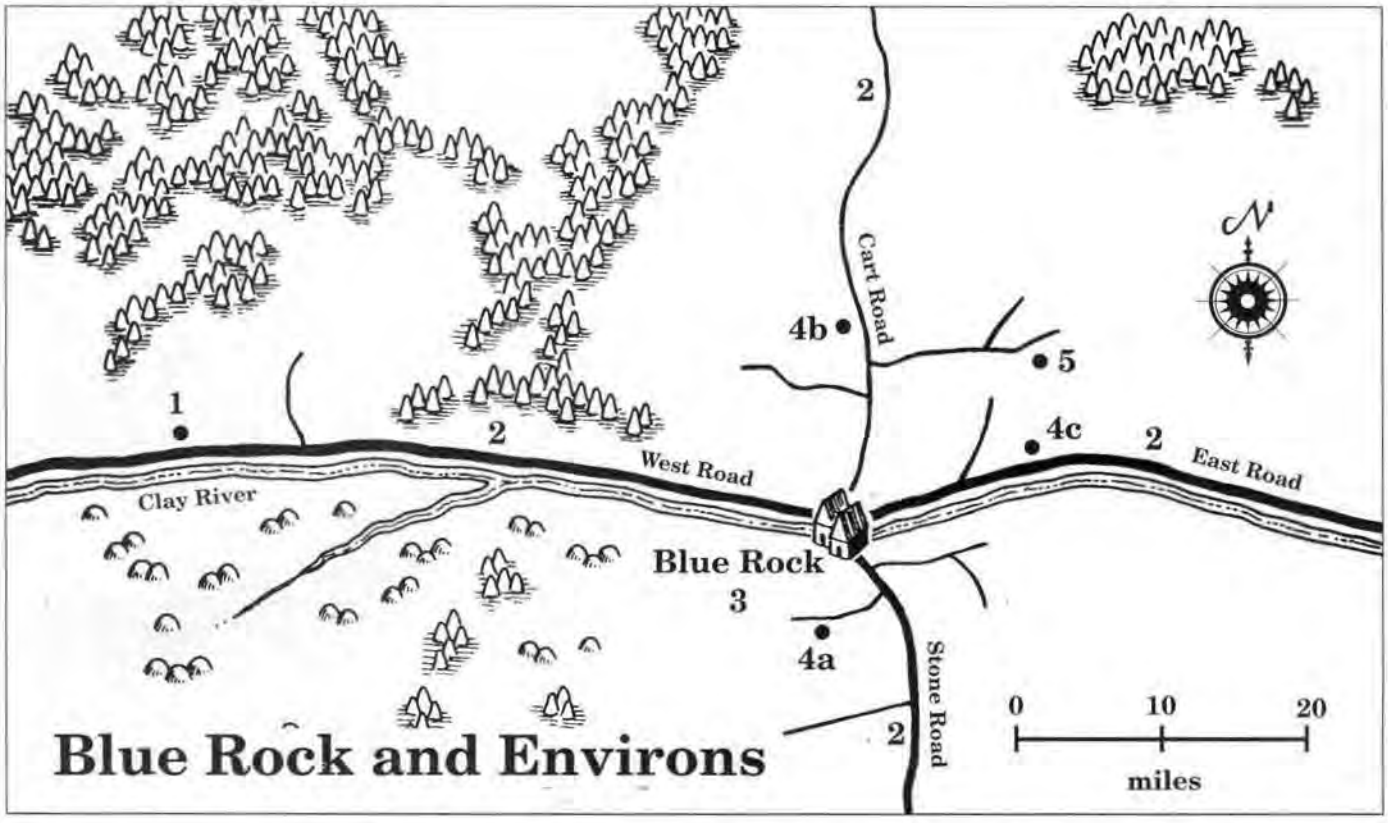
The farmers are grateful to the PCs for saving them. They have little to offer as a reward, but they happily provide food and a place to stay.

The Ploughmans have never seen an ankheg before. They have heard that Lady Anwyn of Blue Rock is planning an expedition but know little about it. They respect Baron Taigel and Lady Anwyn, who support the local farmers' militia.

2. Outlying Farms. These farms are all in good condition, with healthy crops and animals. Most of the farmers are in Blue Rock, attending the local festival (see area **3** below). The few farmers who continue to mind their farms know only that "Everyone's gone to some big to-do in town." Otherwise, they have no information of value.

3. Blue Rock.

> Cresting a low hill, you finally catch sight of Blue Rock. It is a large town surrounded by a wooden palisade, and from this vantage point you can see clearly into the town. The market square teems with people, and the streets are no less crowded. There must be some sort of festival going on. Even from this distance you can hear the faint sounds of music and laughter.



> As you near the town gates, you see a line of people waiting to get in. Most are greeted by the guards and allowed to enter, but some are questioned briefly. The guards wear mail hauberks and carry silver-tipped spears. When it is your turn to enter, the guard's smile slips for a moment. He looks you over and says, "Welcome to Blue Rock. Are you here for the festival?"

If the PCs say they are here to join Lady Anwyn's expedition, read the following. If they give another explanation, read only the second paragraph.

> The guard laughs, "I'm sorry, but you're too late! Lady Anwyn has already returned with a hoard of dwarven treasure." He holds out his spear, which appears dwarven-made. "I've heard she'll be leading a second expedition, but nobody knows when."
>
> "Please don't think me rude. Blue Rock is a peaceful town, and you won't need your weapons. If you'd like, you can leave them here during your stay."

The PCs are not obligated to turn in their weapons. If they do, the weapons are stored securely by the guards and returned upon request.

The guards answer any questions about Blue Rock, but they have no time for idle talk. The only other subject they are willing to discuss is Lady Anwyn "the Fearless," whom they all admire.

There is one guard patrol at each gate at all times. (See "People in Blue Rock" below.) The gates are locked at night but can be opened in emergencies.

Getting Around in Blue Rock

Blue Rock is a bustling community where farmers sell their produce and buy what they cannot make themselves. Although the town is prosperous, it does not trade much with other communities, and outsiders are rare. Most of the current visitors are local farmers who have come for the festival.

Blue Rock has several inns with rooms of varying quality, at triple the regular price (15 sp per day for average accommodations). Stables and meals are similarly expensive, triple the list prices (as given in the *PH*). Many of the inns are full, and it is difficult to find a place to stay. Once the festival ends, the prices drop to normal rates.

During the festival, all beer is paid for by Baron Taigel. Most inns have barrels out front and sell wooden mugs for 1 sp. Children gather mugs that people drop or lose and sell them back to the innkeepers for 2 cp each.

Most mundane commodities are available in the market square, at double the usual price during the festival. Weapons and armor are not available, however. The square is crowded with street performers and appreciative audiences. PCs who are skilled performers (such as those possessing the Juggling or Musical Instrument proficiency) can ply their talents and earn 1d10 gp per hour, provided they roll successful proficiency checks. (Failed rolls typically result in jeers or, in the case of spectacular failures, gales of laughter, but no money is earned.) PCs entertaining the masses with magic quickly attract an audience, since magic is rare in Blue Rock.

There are also stands selling souvenirs from the dwarven stead. These medallions and rings share a common crest: a footman's pick superimposed on a clenched stone fist. These trinkets cost 5–20 gp for a ring and 10–100 gp for a medallion. No one has identified the crest, and the PCs do not recognize it. (It is actually the crest of the Rockfist duergar clan.)

Most of the festival events happen at the fairgrounds south of town. There is a stage where announcements are made and prizes given. Most of the contests are agricultural—pie baking, wood splitting, and animal husbandry—but there is also a local archery contest sponsored by the farmers' militia; the prize is a composite bow and quiver of finely made (but nonmagical) arrows.

People in Blue Rock

Regular Citizens: The locals are mostly friendly, but some of them are less kind to dwarves, yelling phrases like, *"You greedy little badger! Haven't you heard of 'finders keepers, losers weepers?' It's ours now, so you just go home!"* The crowd is not violent but cannot be assuaged by rational arguments. The PCs need to be creative to placate them. If tempers flare and weapons are drawn, a guard patrol appears and disperses the crowd.

Blue Rock Militia. The PCs are likely to meet several guard patrols, especially if they carry weapons in public. Each patrol consists of six guards and one sergeant. If the PCs get into trouble or need help, they may be brought to see the Captain of the Guard, James Briarfield. He keeps the guards efficient and organized, and they wield magical weapons recovered from the recently plundered dwarven stead.

James Briarfield, human male F8: AC 0; MV 12; hp 58; THAC0 13 (11 with *longsword* +2); #AT 3/2 (2 with *longsword* +2); Dmg by weapon type; Str 15, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 15; ML 16; AL NG; XP 975; *chainmail* +2, shield, *longsword* +2 (specialized).

Sergeant, human male F5: AC 5; MV 12; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 16; AL LG; XP 270; chainmail, *spear* +1.

Guards, human males F3 (6): AC 6; MV 12; hp 18; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 14; AL LG; XP 120; brigandine armor, *spear* +1.

Heroes of Blue Rock. The PCs may meet members of Lady Anwyn's expedition. There are five heroes: **Balric Two-sword** (human F5), **Elise Thatcher** (human C6), **Aaron Hardy** (human F3/T4), **Janos Wheelwright** (human W4) and **Donal Whetstone** (human R5). The DM may create statistics for these NPCs if necessary. These NPCs are a good source of rumors but are constantly surrounded by crowds eager to hear about their recent delve into the dwarven stead.

Baron Taigel and **Lady Anwyn**. Baron Taigel and his daughter, Lady Anwyn, live in a villa on the south side of town. They are both busy during the festival and see the PCs only on urgent matters.

Baron Taigel is an ambitious man. Although his barony is agriculturally stable, it is not important politically, strategically, or economically. He feels that the dwarven stead could change that situation and "put Blue Rock on the map."

Baron Taigel, human male F4: AC 10 (3 when armored); MV 12; hp 32; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 18; ML 16; AL LG; XP 175; *chainmail +1*, shield, *longsword* +2. Baron Taigel wears his armor only for special ceremonies or when expecting trouble.

Lady Anwyn, human female F6: AC –2; MV 12; hp 48; THAC0 15; #AT 1 (3/2 with longsword); Dmg by weapon type; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 17; ML 19; AL CG; XP 420; *chainmail +1, shield* +2, longsword (specialized).

Davel Larzancen. Davel Larzancen is an advisor to the baron and runs a small sage's shop. Davel went with Lady Anwyn's expedition, but he is not considered one of the "heroes." He tried to trick Anwyn into giving him the *jade flute* by casting *nondetection* on it and telling her it wasn't magical. He still wants the *flute*, but not badly enough to steal it.

Davel has been translating rubbings taken from inscriptions inside the dwarven stead. If the PCs ask him about the dwarven stead, read the following:

Rumors in Blue Rock

PCs might overhear rumors while touring the streets and inns of the town, but the PCs should have to ask around to learn most of this information.

1. Two nights ago, a group of dwarves showed up at the town gates. It was the middle of the night, but they demanded to be taken to Baron Taigel. They claimed ownership of the dwarven stead and have been making subtle threats about what might happen if the stead isn't turned over to them. (Partially true, except the "dwarves" are really duergar in disguise.)

2. Lady Anwyn "the Fearless" isn't so fearless. A volunteer torchbearer who went with the expedition saw her looking quite shaken. (True.)

3. Abel Smith's barn collapsed in some kind of earthquake. He thinks some huge beast was digging underneath it. (True; see area **4a**.)

4. Monsters have been attacking sheep near the old Cart Road north of town. (True; see area **4b**.)

5. The dwarves are mounting an army. Blue Rock should be preparing for war. (False.)

6. Some guards killed a giant bug on the East Road. (True; see area **4c**.)

7. Those dwarves have been snooping around town, trying to find out where the stead is. If it's their stead, why don't they know where it is? (True, except the "dwarves" are really duergar in disguise.)

8. There were giant walking statues in the dwarven stead. It'll take powerful magic to beat them. (True.)

9. Davel Larzancen knows more about the dwarven stead than anyone else in town. (True.)

10. Lady Anwyn lost her sword somewhere in the stead. She always used to carry it, but no one has seen it since she returned. It was supposed to be magical. (True.)

11. Lady Anwyn has barely started exploring the stead. The tunnels run for miles. (Partially true.)

12. There were giant bugs with glowing red eyes in the dwarven stead. Lady Anwyn just walked right by them and never batted an eye! (True; the "bugs" were fire beetles.)

Davel's face brightens when he realizes you are interested in his research. "The stead was called Farforge, and it seems to have been the outpost of a large clan led by a dwarf named Jolit Dwerdak. The dwarves had all kinds of creatures working for them: fire beetles to light the place, ankhegs to dig tunnels, and rust monsters to devour metal scraps!

"The dwarves did their own mining. It seems they tried using ankhegs once, but the things couldn't do the precision work."

He smiles briefly. "The only other thing I've learned is that the dwarves were involved in some kind of war. I think the ankhegs are more important, though. They've been appearing in the outlying farms, erupting from the earth and terrifying the farmers. With the dwarves' descendants in town, I'd say we can guess where all these monsters are coming from."

Davel pauses intently. Finally he adds, "Of course, if someone could bring me more books and papers from the stead, I'm sure I could figure out how they control them."

Davel does not reveal the location of the stead without approval from Baron Taigel or Lady Anwyn. If the PCs have approval, Davel offers to buy any documents they find inside the stead.

Davel Larzancen, human male W6: AC 8; MV 12; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 11; ML 12; AL CN; XP 420; *dagger +2, ring of protection +2*, spellbook (contains his memorized spells plus others chosen by the DM).

Spells (4/2/2): 1st—*detect magic, identify, magic missile, Nystul's magic aura*; 2nd—*knock, stinking cloud*; 3rd—*haste, nondetection*.

Tom Haycorn. Tom Haycorn is a local bard who makes his living by singing and playing music, usually with Anne Whiteroof and Joel Sandhair (0-level humans with some musical talent). Tom is infatuated with Lady Anwyn.

Tom always carries his three magical items, although he doesn't fully understand any of them. He found the *girdle of the Stonegate dwarves* (see "New Magical Items" sidebar) in the dwarven stead and believes it is cursed because he can't remove it. He is unaware of the *girdle*'s true properties.

Lady Anwyn gave Tom the *jade flute* (see "New Magical Items" sidebar). Neither believes the *flute* is magical. Tom considers it a token of her love and is never without it, even when he sleeps.

Tom's *amulet of proof against detection and location* has been in his family for generations, but he doesn't know of its powers.

If the PCs ask to cast *detect magic* on him, Tom reluctantly agrees, but his *amulet* makes all of his possessions seem nonmagical. Furthermore, divination spells that might reveal the true reasons behind recent ankheg attacks fail to pinpoint the *flute* as the cause. If anyone asks him about the *flute*, he says it was a gift. He won't give it to the PCs unless he is *charmed*. Only Tom, Davel Larzancen, Lady Anwyn, and her adventuring colleagues know the *flute*'s origin.

Tom knows Davel wants the *flute*, so he avoids Davel as much as possible. If forced to meet him, Tom leaves the *flute* in a safe hiding spot.

Tom Haycorn, human male B3: AC 7; MV 12; hp 12; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 17 (16 to non-dwarves, 19 to dwarves); AL NG; XP 120; shortsword, *jade flute, amulet of proof against detection and location, girdle of the Stonegate dwarves*, assorted nonmagical musical instruments.

Thief abilities: CW 80%, DN 30%, PP 30%, RL 15%.

Spells: 1st—*feather fall, magic missile*.

The "Dwarven" Delegation. A group of duergar have rented a house near the baron's villa. They claim to be the rightful heirs to the dwarven stead, showing the crests on their rings as proof. The duergar want the stead's resources. Only six of the fourteen duergar are known to be here; the rest remain *invisible* whenever strangers are in sight. The six diplomats were selected for their resemblance to hill dwarves and are negotiating with Baron Taigel. They add to this deception by drinking potions of *rainbow hues* (each of which contains seven doses) and have Brathnos cast *undetectable alignment* on them before setting out. Only two diplomats visit the baron at a time, and they leave angrily if anyone starts casting spells in their presence. The other duergar prowl around Blue Rock at night, hoping to overhear rumors or information about the stead.

The duergar kill anyone who discovers their true nature, hiding the evidence where possible. If battle erupts, Brathnos remains *invisible* and flees so he can exact revenge later.

Duergar (dwarven) delegates (6): AC 5; MV 6; HD 1+2; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA –2 to opponents' surprise rolls, cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will; SD +4 to saving throws vs. magic; immune to paralysis, illusions, and poison; SZ S (4' tall); ML 13; AL LE; XP 420; *MM/96*; chainmail, shortsword, pewter ring with the Rockfist crest on it (worth 2 gp).

Duergar warriors (4): AC 4; MV 6; HD 2+4; hp 16 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD as above; SZ S (4' tall); ML 13; INT very (11); AL LE; XP 650; *MM/96* chainmail, shield, light crossbow, pick, copper ring with the Rockfist crest on it (4 gp).

Duergar squad leader: AC 2; MV 6; HD 4+8; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD as above; SZ S (4' tall); ML 13; INT very (12); AL LE; XP 1,400; *MM/96*; platemail, shield, warhammer, shortsword, pewter medallion bearing the Rockfist crest (10 gp).

Valind (duergar hero): AC 0; MV 6; F7; hp 59; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD as above; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 14; SZ S (4' tall); ML 15; AL LE; XP 3,000; *MM/96*; platemail, shield, *shortsword +1, +2 vs. magic-using and enchanted creatures*, hematite and pewter medallion bearing the Rockfist crest (50 gp).

Ormod (duergar hero): AC 2; MV 6; T8; hp 42; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD as above; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 12; SZ S (4' tall); ML 15; AL LE; XP 4,000; *MM/96*; studded leather armor, *ring of protection +2, shortsword of wounding +1*, malachite and lead medallion bearing the Rockfist crest (75 gp).

Thief abilities: PP 20%, OL 50%, FRT

40%, MS 25%, HS 20%, DN 35% CW 50%, RL 55%, backstab for triple damage.

Brathnos (duergar leader): AC 2; MV 6; P9; hp 66; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA/SD as above; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 15; SZ S (4' tall); ML 15; AL LE; XP 5,000; *MM*/96; platemail, shield, *footman's mace +2*, potion of *speed*, potion of *rainbow hues* (×4), *beaker of plentiful potions* (produces a potion of *rainbow hues* thrice/week but runs out in one month), black pearl and iron medallion bearing the Rockfist crest (500 gp).

Spells (6/6/4/2/1): 1st—*command, cure light wounds* (×3), *darkness, detect magic*; 2nd—*hold person* (×2), *obscurement, undetectable alignment* (×3); 3rd—*locate object* (×3), *dispel magic*; 4th—*spell immunity, poison*; 5th—*flame strike*.

Events in Blue Rock

All NPCs named in these events are described in "People in Blue Rock."

Event 1: Purple Worms. This event takes place during the first full day the PCs are in Blue Rock. It can happen on any crowded street, but the market square or fairgrounds would be ideal. No major NPCs are in the area save Tom Haycorn.

> Crowds gather to watch the various jugglers, tumblers, and musicians perform in the streets. Separating one song from the next is made difficult by the cheers and gasps of the audience. The babble of voices sounds almost like thunder.
>
> The music is soon accompanied by a low rumbling sound, and the ground begins to vibrate. Suddenly, thirty feet away, the ground bursts upward in a shower of dirt and cobblestones. Two dark, sinuous shapes rise up from the rubble, swaying as if charmed. The music and cheering stop as performers and spectators flee in panic. In an instant, the giant worms begin striking out at anyone within reach.

Purple worms (2): AC 6; MV 9, burrow 9; HD 15; hp 80, 74; THAC0 5; #AT 2; Dmg 2d12/2d20; SA poison, swallow whole; SZ G (25' long); ML 12; INT non (0); AL N; XP 13,000; *MM*/364.

The festivities in Blue Rock come to an earth-shattering end.

On the first round, the purple worms attack civilians (0-level humans with AC 10 and 1d6 hp each). The worms cannot use their stingers until the second round, when they emerge completely.

If the PCs are having an easy time, a third worm appears (hp 62). If they are having trouble, a guard patrol arrives after 5 rounds to help combat the worms.

The worm tunnels collapse into rubble and cannot be explored. Once the purple worms are defeated, James Briarfield arrives with a guard patrol. He assesses the situation and takes the PCs to see Baron Taigel. The Baron thanks the PCs and relays the following:

> "I believe this attack was far from coincidental. I don't know who arranged it or why, but there have been too many similar attacks recently. If you can find the cause, Blue Rock will be even more grateful.
>
> "My guards are too busy with the festival to investigate, and the 'heroes of Blue Rock' cannot go anywhere without drawing a crowd. That is why I'm asking for your help."

Baron Taigel wishes to keep the dwarven stead's location secret. If the PCs convince him there might be clues there, he tells them where it is and gives them Lady Anwyn's map of the stead. (See adjacent page.) Baron Taigel tells the PCs they may keep whatever items they find there, subject to his approval.

Event 2: More Rumblings. Burrowing creatures appear around Blue Rock once or twice a day for several days. The guards inform the PCs whenever an attack occurs. The PCs don't need to be present during these attacks but may question witnesses and examine the sites. The DM should flesh out the details of the "attacks" as required; some suggestions are given below:

- An ankheg is seen trying to swim across the river. It drowns, and the body drifts to shore. No tunnel is found.
- A bulette erupts from the ground and barrels through a large crowd without attacking. A dog confronts the creature as the crowd scatters. The bulette kills and eats the dog, then burrows into the ground.
- A xorn passes through town in a straight line. It phases through stone buildings and changes direction only to dodge people and other organic objects. At some point, it stops running and phases into the ground. Guards claim to have driven it off by throwing stones.

All the encountered creatures have one thing in common: They move by burrowing or phasing through the earth. See area **4** for out-of-town attack sites.

If the PCs connect the attacks with Tom Haycorn, he denies any involvement but suggests that the PCs investigate the dwarven stead, since the recent problems began shortly after Anwyn's party explored the stead.

Event 3: A Hire or Two. The PCs are offered two commissions to explore the stead. First, James Briarfield approaches them. He tells them that Lady Anwyn lost her sword exploring the stead. The sword was a gift from her father. James offers to train the PCs in the art of Blind-fighting if they bring him the sword, so he can return it. It takes three weeks for James to train a PC, who is eligible to take the Blind-fighting nonweapon proficiency at a cost of 1 slot (instead of 2), once a slot becomes available.

Later, the duergar Ormod attempts to hire the PCs. Pretending to be a dwarf (using a dose of a potion of *rainbow hues*), he offers them 5,000 gp worth of gems to map the stead. He has heard about the fight with the purple worms and knows how powerful the PCs are. Brathnos casts *nondetection* on Ormod before he speaks to them. The duergar has no intention of honoring his bargain and plans to steal the map once completed.

Event 4: Missing Patrol. Baron Taigel summons the PCs if they do not find any useful information within a few days. The soldiers guarding the stead have not reported in, and the baron is concerned. Taigel gives the PCs Lady Anwyn's map and asks them to investigate.

Event 5: Dealing with the Duergar. The PCs may initiate this event once they know the "dwarves" are actually duergar. If they tell Baron Taigel, Ormod eavesdrops on the conversation and, if successful, summons the other duergar to attack. If the PCs attack the duergar directly, they must explain themselves to the baron afterward. Brathnos keeps his presence secret and exacts revenge later, if necessary.

If PCs haven't yet traveled to the stead, they discover a rough map among the duergars' possessions. The map pinpoints the stead's location but does not depict the interior; however, there is a note saying (in duergar), "We believe this is Farforge. A strong force has been sent to investigate."

Once the PCs have dealt with all of the duergar, Baron Taigel assumes the problem has been solved. He announces that there will be an award ceremony in two days.

Event 6: Bulette Attack. This event occurs after the duergar have been defeated but before the baron's award ceremony. The encounter takes place in the common room of the PCs' inn.

> It is hard to talk over the noise. The inn is crowded with people enjoying the musicians playing in the corner. They are quite good: an attractive young woman sings and plays her mandolin, while the bard Tom Haycorn plays a spritely melody on his green flute. Providing accompaniment is a young man tapping a beat on his bodhran. Most of the listeners are singing along and thoroughly enjoying themselves.
>
> The song ends, and as the musicians head to the bar for a brief respite, there is a sudden flurry of activity. People trip over each other trying to escape the hole that is opening under them. A huge gray creature with a ridged back pulls itself up through the shattered floorboards.

The creature erupting from the floor of the inn is a bulette. It requires a full round to emerge, after which time it attacks anyone within reach.

Bulette: AC –2/4/6; MV 14, burrow 3; HD 9; hp 45; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 4d12/3d6/3d6; SA jump; SZ L (12' long); ML 11; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 4,000; *MM*/33.

A successful Intelligence check enables PCs to recall that the same musicians were present when the purple

worms attacked in Event 1. They are Tom Haycorn, Anne Whiteroof, and Joel Sandhair. If questioned, Tom explains that he thinks a belt he took from the stead is cursed, and he asks the PCs for help. He allows them to examine the belt (actually a *girdle of the Stonegate dwarves*, as described in the "New Magical Items" sidebar), but he does not trust anyone enough to give them the *flute*. If the PCs take the belt more than 20 yards from Tom, it vanishes and reappears around his waist.

The PCs can do little for Tom other than determine that the belt isn't cursed. Tom asks the PCs to go with him to see Davel Larzancen. He believes Davel might be able to help but wants someone else with him. Before they go, Tom either hides the *jade flute* in his room or gives it to Anne Whiteroof for safekeeping. If the PCs accompany Tom to see Davel about the magical belt, proceed with Event 7.

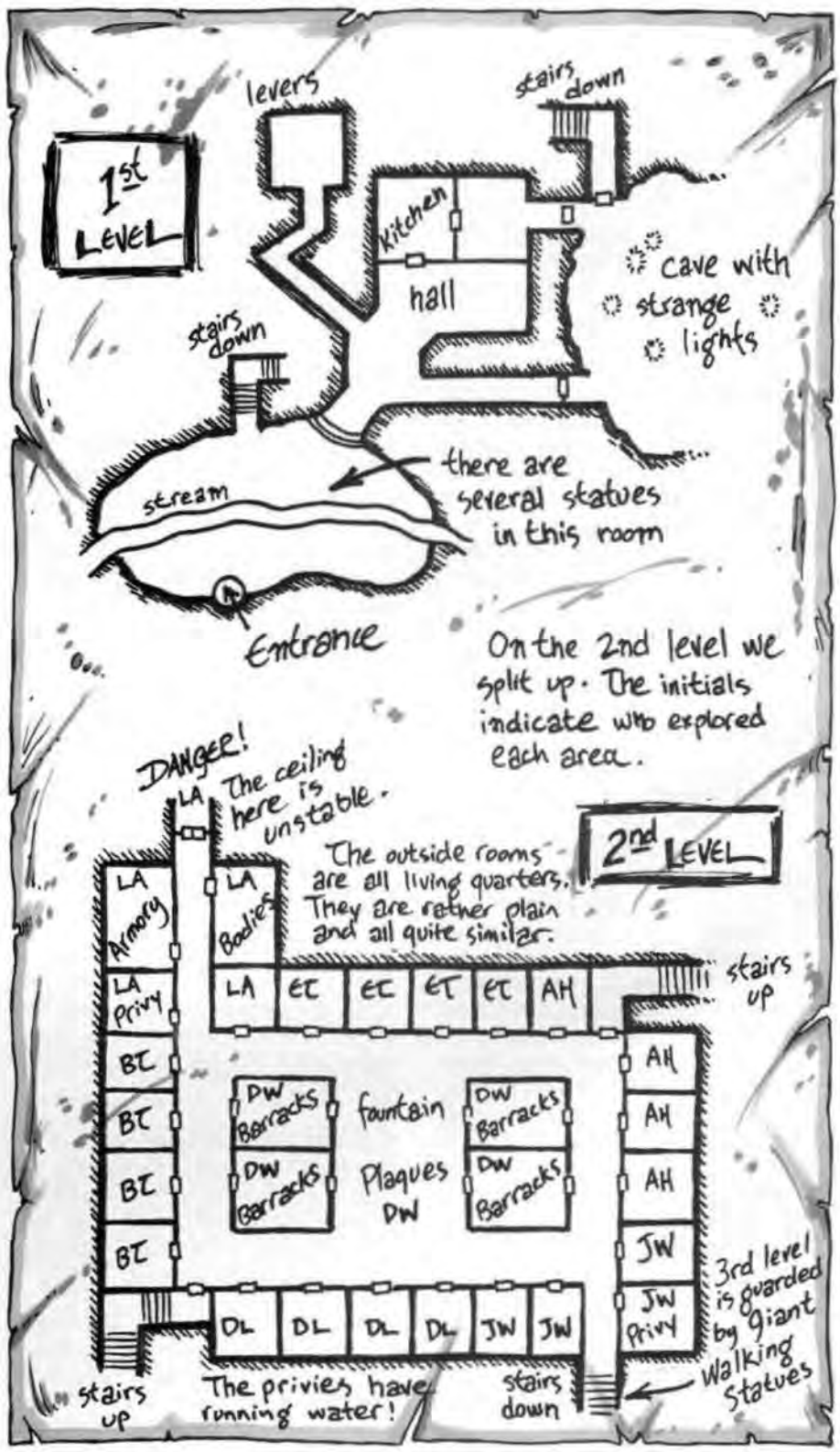
By this time, Brathnos the duergar has determined the true nature of the *jade flute* and uses a *locate object* spell to find it. Relying on his innate power of *invisibility* and given half a chance, Brathnos steals the *flute* from Anne Whiteroof or removes the *flute* from wherever Tom has hidden it. (If necessary, he uses his *hold person* spell to immobilize whoever is holding or guarding the *flute*.)

Event 7: Talking to Davel Larzancen. Davel Larzancen is at the baron's villa, reading by himself in the library. He does not know what is causing the attacks and is doing his utmost to find out. If anyone asks him about the *jade flute*, he claims that it is not magical. The PCs can determine that he is lying by magical means or by making a successful Wisdom check at a –4 penalty. If confronted with his lie, Davel reveals that he cast *nondetection* on the *flute* to make it seem less valuable. If the PCs ask Tom where the *flute* is, he tells them that he hid it.

Once the PCs have figured out that the *flute* is responsible for luring the burrowing monsters to Blue Rock, they begin to hear a haunting melody being played from somewhere in the villa.

If the PCs follow the sounds of the *flute*, it leads them to Baron Taigel's receiving chamber. They find Baron Taigel and Lady Anwyn looking around,

Lady Anwyn's Map



bewildered by the music. Six rounds after the music begins, six umber hulks burst up through the floor and attack.

Brathnos has stolen the *jade flute* and is playing it while *invisible*. He tries to stay hidden and control the umber hulks for as long as possible. Any other duergar who are still alive are *invisible* and present, ready to attack anyone who comes close to locating the music's point of origin. (This requires a successful Detect Noise roll or Musical Instrument proficiency check.) Brathnos casts *spell immunity* before the fight, shielding him from *detect invisibility* spells.

Baron Taigel, Lady Anwyn, Tom Haycorn, and Davel Larzancen (if present) battle the umber hulks. After 7 rounds of fighting, a guard patrol arrives to help. If the PCs are having difficulty, the guards might arrive earlier, or James Briarfield comes with them. If the fight is too easy, more umber hulks could arrive.

If Brathnos has already been killed or captured, the attack is led by Valind or Ormod instead.

Umber hulks (6): AC 2; MV 6, burrow 1–6; HD 8+8; hp 55 each; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 3d4/3d4/1d10; SA confusion; SZ L (8' tall); ML 13; INT average (8); AL CE; XP 4,000; *MM*/352.

Event 8: Aftermath. If anyone is killed in the final battle, Elise Thatcher (see "Heroes of Blue Rock") is summoned. She has a scroll with four *raise dead* spells. Elise *raises* Baron Taigel, Lady Anwyn, Tom Haycorn, and Davel Larzancen before any of the PCs.

For their heroism, PCs are each given the title Knight of Blue Rock (regardless of character class), and they are granted a small portion of land near town. Baron Taigel offers to finance the construction of a small keep on the land, to be farmed by locals who pay taxes to the PCs. If they wish, a steward is assigned to maintain their new estate and collect taxes. The Baron also outfits and maintains a force of twenty soldiers for the PCs' new holding.

At the same ceremony, Lady Anwyn publicly announces her intent to marry Tom Haycorn, with whom she has fallen in love. Baron Taigel privately reprimands Davel Larzancen but does not otherwise punish him.

4. Attack Sites. These are places outside of Blue Rock that have been attacked by monsters. The PCs can learn about them through rumors in town. These attacks occur throughout the adventure, as described in Event 2. All farmers should be treated as 0-level humans.

4a. Smith Farm. Several farmers are helping Abel Smith rebuild his barn. A 5'-deep furrow runs north beneath the wreckage of his old barn. Abel claims he saw the earth collapse and watched helplessly as the trench headed straight for his barn. The furrow ends after 200 yards and was caused by a burrowing purple worm. The worm's tunnel has collapsed and is inaccessible.

4b. Harlson's Field. Farmer Otis Harlson checked his sheep one morning and found half of them slain. Their half-eaten remains were scattered around a deep hole in the ground. Otis didn't explore the hole and moved the surviving sheep into a new pasture.

The hole descends about 60 feet to a tunnel running north to south. The tunnel travels north for 50 yards before caving in, and stretches south for half a mile, where it descends into water. After traveling a quarter mile underwater, the tunnel ends. Floating in the flooded passage is a drowned adult ankheg.

4c. The East Road. A gaping hole in the middle of this road has been roped off, and a patrol from Blue Rock is guarding it. Inside is the body of an ankheg. A patrol happened to be traveling the road when the monster surfaced, and they killed it. The tunnel runs east for several miles, until it becomes clogged with mud near the river.

5. Everett Farm/Dwarven Stead. If the PCs don't know where the stead is, this farm looks no different from the dozens of others in the area. If they have been told its location or have located the stead via magic, read the following:

> A sign at the end of the lane reads "Everett's Farm." Cows and sheep dot the fields, but there are no people in sight.

> A barn and a chicken coop stand some distance from the house. There is also a dog kennel, conspicuously empty. A small shed appears to have been built recently; its cedar walls are still a pale tan, while the other buildings have all weathered to gray.

Geoff and Sarah Everett ran a prosperous farm. Two months ago, Geoff began digging a well where he believed there was an underground stream. He had dug about ten feet when he found a large cavern containing several dwarven statues and a family of giant frogs. Geoff reported his find to Baron Taigel, who swore him to secrecy. Geoff built a shed over the hole and ran the farm as usual.

Lady Anwyn's expedition explored the upper two levels of the stead. A small group of guards were left to keep people away until she returned. Unfortunately, a group of duergar have since found the stead, killed the Everetts, and hidden the bodies in the farmhouse. Anyone examining the bodies can tell that they were killed by slashing weapons. In the barn are the remains of three dogs killed by crossbow bolts.

The duergar in the stead answer to Brathnos but aren't in direct contact with the duergar delegation in Blue Rock.

There is a winch set up in the new shed to lower people into the stead. The winch can support up to 500 pounds and requires a Strength of 13 or more to operate. The hole opens into area **5a**.

Exploring the Dwarven Stead

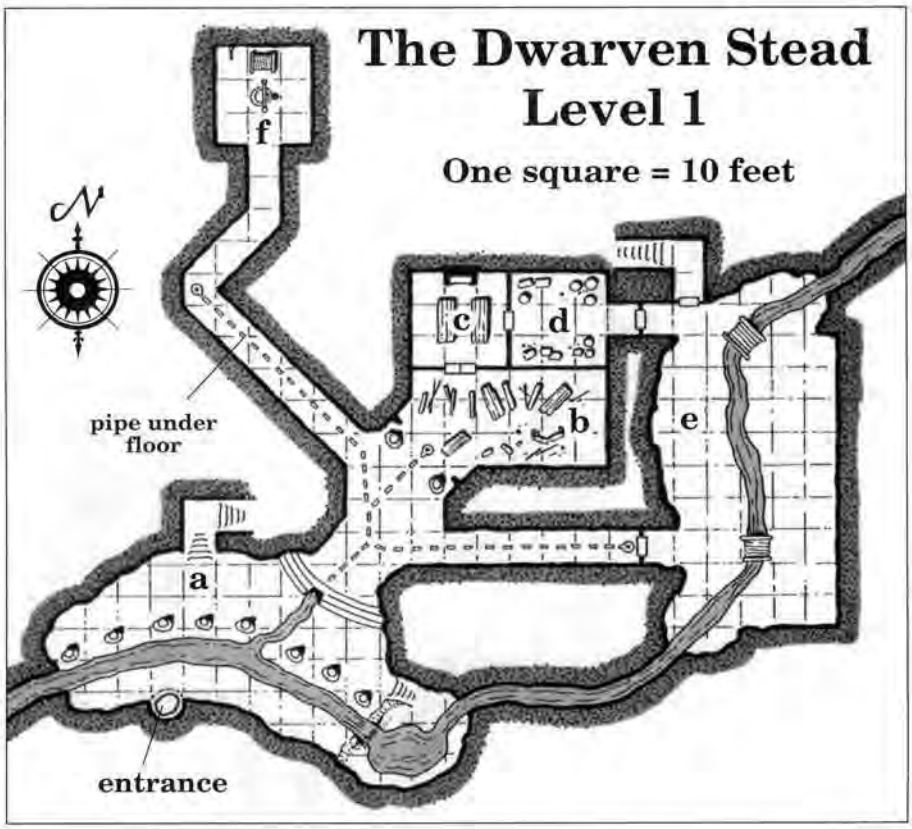
The dwarven name for this stead loosely translates to "Farforge." The stead was an outpost of the Stonegate dwarf clan, founded near a rich vein of mithril. At the time, the Stonegate dwarves were at war with the Rockfist duergar. The duergar overwhelmed the dwarven capital city and sent a small force to capture Farforge. Two hundred duergar attacked the stead, but the defenders prevailed. Only twenty Stonegate dwarves survived. They knew their capital had fallen and that more duergar would come. The dwarves collapsed the entrance to Farforge, sealing themselves inside. When another force of duergar arrived, they couldn't find the stead.

The remaining Stonegate dwarves repaired the damage to the stead and put everything back in its place. They protected Farforge for the rest of their lives. Some have continued to do so even in death. The stead remained undisturbed until Geoff Everett found an entrance while digging his well.

Although it has been abandoned for some time, the stead is in remarkably good condition. (There is no danger of collapse.) Most of the rooms are cut into the rock, although there are also masonry walls. The doors are wood reinforced with iron. The furniture is also wooden but has fared less well than the doors.

There are small empty cages attached to most walls near the ceiling. These once held fire beetles to light the stead. Now they contain only their brittle remains.

Farforge contains vast quantities of magical weapons and armor. Most of these are of little value to high-level PCs. PCs who leave the weapons and armor for the people of Blue Rock should receive a 2,000 XP bonus for helping the town. If they try to take everything, Baron Taigel considers the items stolen and treats the PCs as thieves.



Level 1

5a. Entrance Cavern.

> Peering into this cave, you see a glittering stream. To the east, it rushes over a small ledge into a swirling pool. Along the north bank of the stream stand eight stone statues of dwarves. Although they are all dour in countenance, no two are alike. A branch of the stream runs between two of the statues and disappears into an opening below a raised platform. Broad steps on either side of the opening lead up to this raised area, which opens into a wide passage. Almost directly north, beyond the statues, a much narrower staircase descends into darkness.
>
> To the west lies a heap of bodies. Some appear to be giant frogs, but the rest are human.

The stream is cold and fast, but only 3 feet deep. Occasionally fish swim by. There is a grate over both holes where the stream exits, but the grate over the western sluice has broken away. The stream extends 25 miles upstream to a pond in the woods northwest of Blue Rock. There are numerous air pockets and small caves along the way, although none that can be reached by someone holding his or her breath.

Downstream leads to area **5e**. The branch of the stream that passes beneath the northeastern stairs divides, becoming too narrow for normal-sized PCs to follow. The stairs to the north lead down to the southwest corner of Level 2.

There are three giant frogs and ten slain humans heaped to the west. The giant frogs were killed with crossbow bolts by Lady Anwyn's expedition. The humans—town guards—were later slain by the duergar currently inhabiting the stead. The ten guards wear nonmagical chainmail, and piled next to their bodies are fourteen *spears +1*. These items are the property of the baron.

The statues represent dwarven heroes. A dwarf making a successful Intelligence check (or anyone making a successful Ancient History proficiency check) recognizes them. The statues are well crafted but nonmagical.

5b. Dining Room.

> An archway flanked by two grim-faced dwarven statues leads into a dining hall. Benches and tables are arranged in what were once neat rows, but many have been knocked over and broken. Some sort of fungus or mold is now growing on several of them.

The fungus is harmless, but five duergar mounted on steeders are clinging to the ceiling. (The duergar are *invisible*, but the steeders are not.) These guards were left to guard the entrance but have been relaxing here. If the PCs have kept their intrusion quiet, the duergar are sitting at one of the tables, while the steeders still cling to the ceiling. They attack intruders on sight.

When a steeder is slain, its duergar rider immediately casts *enlarge*, bursting free of his saddle restraints to attack the steeder's slayer.

Duergar (4): AC 4; MV 6; HD 2+4; hp 16 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA –2 to opponents' surprise rolls; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will (as 2nd-level wizard); SD +4 to saving throws vs. magic; immune to paralysis, illusions, and poison; SZ S (4' tall); ML 13; INT very (11); AL LE; XP 650; *MM/96*; chainmail, shield, light crossbow, four crossbow bolts, footman's pick, copper ring with the Rockfist crest on it (worth 5 gp).

Iarmak (duergar squad leader): AC 2; MV 6; HD 4+8; hp 30; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA –2 to opponents' surprise rolls; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will (as 4th-level wizard); SD as above; SZ S (4' tall); ML 13; INT very (12); AL LE; XP 1,400; *MM/96*; platemail, shield, warhammer, *short-sword +1*, pewter medallion bearing the Rockfist crest (worth 10 gp).

Steeders (5): AC 4; MV 12 (6 on walls and ceilings); HD 4+4; hp 22 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA poison, cling to prey; SZ L (10' diameter); ML 13; INT low (5); AL CE; XP 975; *MM/326*.

5c. Kitchen.

This room was once a kitchen. Two stone tables dominate the center of the room, covered with utensils and dishware. A large hearth takes up one-third of the north wall, with a long spit and a large cauldron still in place.

There is nothing of value here.

5d. Food Storage Room. This must have been some kind of storage room, judging by the old bins and barrels scattered around. Nothing remains of whatever was kept here.

5e. Mushroom Farm.

Running through the middle of this cavern is a stream crossed by two small bridges. The far side has been roughly squared out. Large mushrooms grow profusely throughout the chamber, and you can see dim lights moving among them on the east side of the stream.

None of the fungi are dangerous; they are all varieties originally harvested by the dwarves. The lights are fire beetles living among the mushrooms. They don't leave this room but defend their home if attacked.

Both ends of the stream have grates over the openings. The exiting stream flows for 20 miles, where it emerges in the Clay River.

Fire beetles (10): AC 4; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ S (2½' long); ML 12; INT non (0); AL N; XP 35; *MM/18*.

5f. Defense Mechanisms.

The bent corridor opens into a square chamber with several odd devices in it. There is a huge lever set in the far wall, a winch nearby with chains running into the floor, and a cauldron suspended above a brazier near the middle of the room, set so it can be poured into another hole in the floor.

The lever once activated the collapse of the entrance tunnel; it was pulled long ago and no longer does anything. The winch raises and lowers a portcullis in area **5l**. The cauldron, used to heat and pour oil into area **5l**, is currently empty.

Level 2

5g. Living Quarters. These rooms were once family living quarters, and a few have been subdivided into two or three smaller rooms. The doors are engraved with the names of the former occupants. The rooms hold a variety of furniture in poor condition, clothes and linens that fall apart if handled, and some tools and utensils in usable condition.

The room marked with an asterisk had only one occupant. The name "Theoric" is engraved on the door. There is one bed, one chair, and a shelf carved directly into the back wall, sculpted with fancy reliefs. There is no indication what the shelf held. Davel Larzancen found the *jade flute* here.

5h. Barracks. These rooms were barracks for soldiers and workers. Each room contains ten bunkbeds, with two chests under each. The chests contain clothes

and other personal items in poor condition. Nothing of value can be found here.

5i. Latrines. Each of these rooms contains ten latrine stalls. Waste is carried away by steadily flowing water. Anything dropped into a latrine ends up in area **5w**.

5j. Weapon Storage.

> This room contains racks of weapons and armor. Several barrels close to the door now stand empty, but there are still dozens of weapons. Six dwarf-sized suits of chainmail hang along the north wall. Everything in this room appears to be made of mithril.

The dwarves stored weapons here in case of attack. The barrels by the door held spears, most of which were taken to Blue Rock (although a few may be found in area **5a**). Gaps in the racks show that some weapons and armor have been removed, including all of the crossbow bolts. There are fifteen dilapidated and unusable light crossbows, four *warhammers +1*, twelve *handaxes +1*, eight *footman's maces +1*, and six dwarf-sized suits of *chainmail +1*.

Lady Anwyn has made a record of these items, and Baron Taigel will not be pleased if the PCs try to cart off everything.

5k. Guard Room.

> This room's original purpose is unclear. The floor is heaped with crumbling dwarven skeletons wearing rusty armor. They must have been here a long time, but someone has moved them around recently. In the northeast corner is a small pile of rubble.

This room served as the barracks for Farforge's gate guards. The skeletons are the remains of the duergar who attacked the stead hundreds of years ago. There are over two hundred of them. They have been stripped of everything of value. The jewelry being sold in the Blue Rock square (see the "Getting Around in Blue Rock" section) was taken from this room, along with several items now in Baron Taigel's treasury.

5l. Entrance. This passage is entered through a large set of double doors made of solid iron. The doors are barred on the south side. If the PCs lift the bar and open the doors, read the following:

> The passage continues only 12 feet before it becomes choked with dirt and rubble. A sword lies on the floor just inside the door, and you see an overturned wheelbarrow and shovel a little farther along. A dwarf-sized skeleton lies at the edge of the rubble, still clutching a pick and wearing the tattered remains of work clothes.
>
> To your horror, bits of flesh start growing over the exposed bones. Muscles and tendons quickly stretch to cover the skeleton, and you can see blood pumping through newly formed veins. Internal organs swell and join together, and skin spreads over knitting flesh. The dwarf's clothes reform as well, and in moments he appears completely intact. As he stands, you see his skeleton still lying exactly as it was. The dwarf begins clawing at the rubble, struggling desperately but affecting nothing. "Help me!" he cries out.

The dwarf is a phantom (*MM*/287), and the PCs must make a saving throw vs. death magic (with a –2 penalty) or suffer the effects of a *fear* spell. The phantom is otherwise harmless and can be affected only by a *remove curse* spell cast at 12th level or higher. Seven dwarven guards caught this cowardly dwarf trying to dig his way out of the stead. They killed him and made an oath over his body to protect the stead forever.

If the PCs remain in the chamber for any length of time, the phantom continues babbling as it digs. It says things like, "I've got to get out of here!" "Please help me!" and "I need Theoric's help!"

The sword by the doorway is a *longsword +2* of human manufacture. One side of the blade is engraved with the name "Anwyn." Lady Anwyn dropped the blade as she fled the phantom. Tom Haycorn, the only person with her at the time, managed to hold his ground. He found his *girdle of the Stonegate dwarves* here. Tom sang to Lady Anwyn, restoring her courage, and she asked him to tell no one of what happened. They told everyone the ceiling here was unsafe and barred the doors to discourage further investigation.

Carved into the northern side of the doors is an ax and a crown—the crest of the Stonegate dwarves. Above and below the crest are the names "Farforge" and "Stonegate" in ancient Dwarvish.

5m. Fountain.

> This room is dominated by a fountain. Water pours directly from the ceiling into a large basin, then runs along a channel into a second basin, where it drains into a hole. Plaques engraved with ancient Dwarvish runes cover the fountain and the walls.

A duergar patrol is waiting here, currently *invisible*. They were checking the inscriptions for useful information when they heard the PCs approaching. They have equipped themselves from area **5j**. The PCs receive an additional –2 penalty to their surprise rolls because the rushing water muffles noise. The duergar cast *enlarge* on themselves before they attack, and Grumm's first attack is an attempted backstab.

Duergar (4): See area **5b** for complete statistics and equipment.

Khaljor (duergar squad leader): See area **5b** for complete statistics and equipment.

Grumm (duergar hero): AC 2; MV 6; P5/T5; hp 36; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab (+4 to hit, ×3 damage), –2 to opponents' surprise rolls, cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will (as 5th-level wizard); SD see area **5b**; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12; SZ S (4' tall); ML 15; AL LE; XP 3,000; *MM*/96; *studded leather +2*, *shortsword +1*, malachite and lead medallion bearing the Rockfist crest (worth 75 gp).

Spells (5/4/1): 1st—*cause fear*, *cure light wounds* (×2), *darkness*, *pass without trace*; 2nd—*hold person* (×2), *obscurement*, *silence 15' radius*; 3rd—*dispel magic*.

Thief abilities: PP 5%, OL 20%, FRT 20%, MS 75%, HS 40%, DN 15% CW 30%, RL 0%.

If the fight goes badly for the duergar, they turn *invisible* and flee, attacking again later.

The water in the fountain pours in from area **5a** and flows down to area **5x**. Davel Larzancen had rubbings taken of all of the inscriptions in this room; the inscriptions recount the history of the dwarven stead through the fall of Stonegate and the war with the Rockfist duergar clan.

Level 3

5n. Dwarven Defenders.

> The stairs descend to a 30'-square room. Set into the south wall is a pair of iron doors flanked by two 9'-tall stone statues depicting dwarves. As you approach, the statues step forward and block the doors.

The stone golems attack any non-dwarf who comes within 10 feet of the doors. If the PCs leave, the golems do not pursue them. Any dwarf is allowed to pass. If a dwarf speaks the proper command word ("krondaar"), the golems allow others to pass. The command word can be learned with a *divination* or *legend lore* spell. The golems cannot be commanded to leave this room.

Stone golems (2): AC 5; MV 6; HD 14; hp 60 each; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3d8; SA cast *slow* spell every other round (10' range; one target only); SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to mind-affecting spells; SZ L; ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 8,000; *MM*/166.

5o. Throne Room. The doors to this room are stuck and require a successful Open Doors roll to force open.

> Atop a raised dais at the far end of this room stands a marble throne occupied by a dwarven skeleton wearing dusty platemail and a simple iron diadem. Laid out neatly on the tile floor are the skeletal remains of his subjects, all clad in armor and clasping weapons.
> The walls are carved with inscriptions that begin on the southern wall to your left, continue along the west, north, and east walls, and end on the southern wall to your right.

None of the skeletons is animated or dangerous, but there is a *glyph of warding* (cast at 10th level of ability) on the dais. Any character stepping onto the dais suffers 10d4 points of electrical damage (save for no damage).

There are 83 skeletons, including that of the dwarven leader, or carl. The carl wears *platemail +1* and grips a *battle-ax +2*. His iron crown is a *diadem of insight* (which functions exactly as a *gem of insight*). He also wears a platinum and emerald medallion with the Stonegate crest on it (worth 5,000 gp). Among the remains on the floor are 82 suits of chainmail, nine *battle-axes +1*, 53 normal shields, 32 warhammers, ten *warhammers +1*, 27 hand-axes, and a *footman's pick +2*. If the PCs take more than a few magical weapons and Baron Taigel learns of it, he will want them for his armory.

The inscription is a lengthy poem describing the glory of the Stonegate dwarves. Anyone who reads Dwarvish can make a Reading/Writing proficiency check at a –6 penalty to translate it. It reveals that the stead was founded about 900 years ago. The poem also reveals that the carl of Farforge was named Jolit Dwerdak and also provides one dwarf's insight into the long war between the dwarves and the Rockfist duergar clan.

Rubbings taken from this inscription are worth 500 gp to Davel Larzancen. Obtaining a copy of the poem requires several hours of work.

5p. The Dwarven Carl's Chamber.

> This once opulent room must have been the dwarven leader's living quarters. The iron bed is intact, although the mattress and blankets have completely decayed. A desk has collapsed, spilling papers across the floor. The faded and torn remains of elegant tapestries cover three walls. Between the two doors on the south wall is an intact mosaic of colored stones.

An old chest under the bed contains rotting clothes and a small box of gems. The gems are worth 500 gp, 250 gp (×2), 100 gp (×6), and 50 gp (×7). The papers are illegible and disintegrate if touched.

The mosaic is a map showing the former holdings of the Stonegate dwarves. Farforge is the most remote. Some non-dwarven cities are marked, but there is no sign of Blue Rock. A PC who makes a History proficiency check can tell that the map was made about 900 years ago.

5q. The Alchemist-Priest's Room. This former bedchamber is crowded with duergar. The duergar have been recovering from a fight in area **5u**. They have healed themselves with potions taken from area **5r**, and the empty bottles lie strewn upon the floor. The duergar are discussing what to do next. If the PCs have been noisy, the duergar are ready. Otherwise, they are not expecting trouble. If the fight goes badly, they flee and try to catch the PCs by surprise later.

This was the bedroom of the dwarven alchemist-priest of Farforge. The furniture and trappings were once fine but have deteriorated considerably

Duergar (5): See area **5b** for complete statistics and equipment.

Hornath and **Drulg** (duergar squad leaders): See area **5b** for complete statistics and equipment.

Valdred (duergar hero): AL LE; AC 0; MV 6; F8; hp 78; THAC0 12; #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; SA –2 to opponents' surprise rolls; cast *enlarge* and *invisibility* at will (as 8th-level wizard); SD +5 to saving throws vs. magic; immune to paralysis, illusions, and poison; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 16; SZ S (4' tall); ML 15; XP 4,000; MM/96; *platemail +1, shield +1, dwarven thrower warhammer +3*, gold medallion bearing the Rockfist crest (worth 75 gp).

5r. Laboratory.

> Pushed against the walls are four stone tables. Above them are shelves cluttered with jars. A small skeleton is hunched over a desk in the middle of the room as though it fell asleep reading a book. In one corner, a broken wicker cage hangs from the ceiling.

The jars are labeled in Dwarvish, but most of their contents dried up centuries ago. Seven potions remain: *healing* (×2), *heroism, sweet water, oil of acid resistance, oil of impact*, and *invisibility*. Another jar contains "rust monster grease," a substance rendered from dead rust monsters. There is enough grease to destroy one Size M weapon or similar metal object. If hurled

at an iron golem, the grease inflicts 3d6 points of damage. A sealed bone tube next to the jar contains a clerical scroll with *remove curse* (×2), *raise dead* (×2), and *heal* cast at the 12th level of ability.

The alchemist-priest's skeleton wears rotting rags. On one finger he wears an iron *ring of sustenance*. The book he was reading is a treatise on rust monsters and disintegrates when lifted. In the desk are his notes on rust monster grease and several books of practical alchemy written in ancient Dwarvish, all of which fall apart when handled.

The cage once held a rust monster in stasis. The spell failed, and the rust monster escaped and was killed by the golem in area **5x**.

5s. Niche.

> The corridor comes to a T-shaped junction. A 10'-tall, semicylindrical alcove is set into the northern wall.

The iron golem in area **5x** once stood in the alcove, which is otherwise empty.

5t. Smelter.

> The eastern wall of this room is dominated by a series of five large furnaces or boilers. Coal and raw ore are piled along the western wall.

The furnaces are used for extracting metal from raw ore. They are in perfect working order but have not been used in centuries.

5u. Ore Mines. This large chamber is roughly hewn. Tools and wheelbarrows are scattered around the floor, along with seven dwarven skeletons. Three pits descend into darkness, each with a large iron winch beside it. The winches work but squeal noisily when turned.

This is where the dwarves of Farforge mined mithril and iron. Any PC making a successful Mining proficiency check can tell that it is extremely rich ore. At the bottom of one of the shafts are the bodies of three duergar, each wearing a suit of *chainmail +1* and a copper ring with the Rockfist crest (worth 5 gp). Each also carries a shield, a light crossbow, 1d10 *light quarrels +1*, and a *handax +1*.

The last seven surviving Stonegate dwarves swore to defend this mine for all time and cling to that oath even in death. Their relentless drive to protect their home has transformed them into undead monsters. The golems in area **5n** no longer recognize them as dwarves, so these warriors are trapped.

The dwarven skeleton warriors wait until the PCs enter the room before they attack, hoping to gain surprise and cut off any attempts to flee. They cannot be turned and fight until destroyed. Their souls are trapped in mithril helms (instead of circlets) that are buried in area **5v**. The skeletal warriors' desire to retrieve them is outweighed by their stronger desire to guard the mines.

Dwarven skeleton warriors (7): AC 4; MV 6; HD 9+2; hp 64, 62, 58, 55, 52, 50, 46; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (+3 to hit); SA fear; SD +1 or better weapons to hit; cannot be turned; MR 90%; SZ M (4' tall); ML 20; INT exceptional (15); AL NE; XP 4,000; *MM*/317 (variant); *chainmail +1*, *battle-ax +1*.

5v. Coal Mine.

> The tunnel leads to a smaller mining area. There is only one pit here, with a winch beside it like the others.

This is where coal was mined to fuel the forges and smelters. The mine shaft has been partially filled in, burying seven mithril helms containing the life essences of the skeletal warriors in area **5u**. The helms (worth 1,000 gp apiece) lie beneath 30 feet of rubble.

5w. Waste Disposal Chamber. A small stream of water flows into this room from each side. They meet in a basin in the middle of the room and drain into a 3'-wide hole in the bottom. The runoff water from the entire stead flows into here. Directly below this room is a large chamber (30' × 30' × 50' tall) cut into porous rock. As the water seeps into the stone, the detritus remains in the lower chamber, where it is devoured over time by a crystal ooze. The ooze cannot climb out of the tank.

Crystal ooze: AC 8; MV 1, swim 3; HD 4; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 4d4; SA poison; SD 75% invisible in water; immune to cold, acid, heat, and fire; weapons inflict only 1 point of damage per hit; SZ M; ML 10; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/278.

5x. Forge. The PCs may hear thumping and banging as they approach this room. However, the faint rush of water makes the sounds indistinct.

> This room looks like a large smithy. Water pours from the ceiling into a large cooling trough surrounded by several anvils. A forge stands in each corner, one of them full of glowing coals. A twelve-foot tall iron statue is bent low over the forge, with one arm thrust into the glowing embers. As it turns, you see that it is covered with splatter-shaped patches of rust. Half of its face is obscured by corrosion, and what remains has a look of madness. As it pulls its hand out of the fire, you see that it clutches a huge sword, glowing red-hot and broken off a few feet up the blade.

This iron golem has had a nasty encounter with a rust monster. Although the rust monster was killed, the golem suffered considerably. It is trying to repair itself, although it has no actual emotions or free will. It is unable to follow commands and attacks anyone who comes near it, pursuing them anywhere on this level except the mines (area **5u**). If the PCs restore it to full hit points using magical fire, it regains its full powers.

A dwarf can control the golem with a series of commands; however, learning the command words requires a *commune*, *divination*, or *legend lore* spell. The golem cannot leave this level.

Rusted iron golem: AC 3; MV 6; HD 18; hp 80 (currently 52); THAC0 3; #AT 1; Dmg 3d10; SA nauseating gas (*stinking cloud* every 7 rounds); SD +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to most spells, healed by magical fire; SZ L; ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 13,000; *MM*/166.

Near the foot of the golem are the remains of the slain rust monster.

5y. Store Room. This chamber is full of metal ingots and sacks of coal. There are 100 bars of iron (worth 25 gp each), 30 bars of silver (100 gp each), and 15 bars of mithril (500 gp each) here. The ingots weigh 30 pounds each and are awkward to transport.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs have finished exploring the stead, they should return to Blue Rock. Continue the events in town until the mystery has been solved and all of the duergar have been dealt with.

Baron Taigel is an ambitious man and powerful ally. His future plans depend on your campaign. He might try to improve the stature of his barony, rising in power within the kingdom, or if the king is corrupt, start a rebellion. He wants the PCs as allies and treats them accordingly. The PCs are in a position to move beyond simple adventuring and become involved in the politics of their campaign world. There are also many possibilities for important quests and missions for Baron Taigel.

Since there is no one competent to run the mines in Blue Rock, the baron needs to find a way to bring in miners. He might ask the PCs to negotiate with a dwarven or gnomish kingdom. There also could be some legitimate Stonegate dwarves who wish to reclaim Farforge. The Rockfist duergar could come back, or someone else who would like to control a major mithril mine.

Successful PCs should receive a story award of 10,000 XP. PCs who considered the welfare of the citizens of Blue Rock (made an effort to save the Ploughmans' children and cattle, didn't try to take everything in the stead, etc.) should receive XP bonuses. Remember to give bonuses to players who used roleplaying to solve their problems as well as those who had clever plans. Ω

New Magical Items

Girdle of the Stonegate Dwarves
This belt operates exactly as a *girdle of dwarvenkind* with the following exceptions. The *girdle* allows the wearer to speak, read, and write the ancient Stonegate dialect of Dwarvish. The wearer may communicate in modern Dwarvish by making an Intelligence check at a –6 penalty. It further allows the wearer to use any "dwarf only" magical items. The wearer is also recognized as a dwarf by magical triggers. Thus, the wearer can cross a *glyph of warding* programmed to allow passage to dwarves only, while golems programmed to guard a chamber against intrusion by non-dwarves ignore the wearer completely.

The *girdle* was originally intended as a gift to non-dwarves who earned the respect of the Stonegate dwarves. It has been enchanted so that if lost or stolen, it returns to its owner. If the owner dies, it magically returns to the nearest Stonegate dwarf. *Remove curse* has no effect on this function of the belt. If the *girdle of the Stonegate dwarves* is ever given willingly (with the intent that it be kept) by its owner to another, the recipient becomes the new owner.

XP Value: 4,000 **GP Value:** 16,000

Jade Flute
The *jade flute* was originally owned by Theoric, a dwarven bard. It appears as a normal flute carved from jade with silver fittings. The *flute* operates in a similar manner to *pipes of the sewers*, except that it uses subsonic vibrations to summon and control burrowing creatures. When played by a skilled dwarven musician, it summons any such creatures within one hundred miles. The summoned creatures must travel by normal means to reach the *flute*.

The *flute* player can command the summoned monsters by making a successful Musical Instrument (flute) proficiency check. A new check is required for each command given, and if the musician fails the check or stops playing, control is lost. If the player concentrates on a specific type of creature, then only the nearest creatures of that type come to the call.

A successful proficiency check is required to play the *flute* without calling upon its power to summon burrowing creatures. Only dwarves (including derro and duergar) can harness the magic of the *jade flute*. Its magic may also be used by a non-dwarf wearing the *girdle of the Stonegate dwarves*.

XP Value: 6,000 **GP Value:** 15,000

There's an old saying: When the Cat's away, the rats will play.

FRUIT OF THE VINE

BY CHARLES C. REED

One horrible hybrid

Artwork by Toren Atkinson
Cartography by Renee Ciske

This adventure is Charles' third appearance in DUNGEON® Adventures, *and he has another module scheduled for a future issue.*

"Fruit of the Vine" is an AD&D® adventure for 3–5 characters of levels 2–4 (about 12 total levels). It can take place in nearly any city or town. The part played by the merchant Thaddeus Nord is more effective if Thaddeus is replaced by an NPC who is a friend of the PCs.

For this adventure, the PCs should have access to either a paladin's *cure disease* ability or a *cure disease* scroll.

From Little Acorns Grow

A yellow musk creeper has taken root in the courtyard of an abandoned house once owned by the adventuring thief Emellor the Cat. (Emellor was known as "the Cat" to his friends because he took long naps during the day, not for his professional skill.) The creeper grew in the soil of the courtyard until its burrowing roots encountered a patch of olive slime growing on some of Emellor's old adventuring gear in the basement. The slime infected the creeper, producing a weird symbiotic plant, an olive creeper. The pollen of the bright yellow flowers has an effect similar to infection by olive slime. (For more information, consult the "Olive Creeper" sidebar.)

Over the past few days, several small animals have succumbed to the olive creeper. A merchant named Thaddeus Nord decided he wanted to purchase the abandoned property and convert it into a store. Yesterday, he procured a skeleton key from a local thief and entered the building for a quick look. He found several strange yellow flowers growing from a crack in the wall and was lured by their enchanting aroma.

Thaddeus is now in the beginning stages of olive creeper infection. He keeps his condition hidden from others while simultaneously attempting to lure new victims to the olive creeper. He looks a bit pale and sickly but lacks the waxy yellow complexion of a true musk zombie. If nothing is done to help him, he metamorphoses into a slime-covered zombie in seven days. See the "Olive Creeper" sidebar for details on the zombie life cycle.

Stop and Smell the Roses

Compelled by the creeper, Thaddeus gathered several bundles of flowers, including olive creeper flowers from the house, and proceeded to the marketplace where he encountered a group of three adventurers. While extolling the freshness of his flowers, he waved the bouquet under the noses of two adventurers, and the yellow musk flowers sprayed their infecting pollen. The third member of the group, a fighter named Shannon Ringhill, was suspicious of the way Thad presented his bouquet and did not smell the flowers.

After a large lunch, Shannon's two friends, Kelch and Leram, left her and returned to the market, where they again met Thaddeus. Shannon, concerned about her friends' disappearance, went to the market to look for them. She saw them speaking to Thaddeus but lost them in the crowd. Thaddeus led his two victims to the abandoned house. After placing several transmuted rat zombies into his backpack, he returned to the market to find still more victims.

In the afternoon at the marketplace, Thaddeus encounters the PCs. Read or paraphrase the following:

> Approaching you through the crowd in the market is the friendly merchant Thaddeus Nord, an old acquaintance. He looks a bit under the weather but smiles when he sees you. His pack appears to be rather heavy, no doubt filled with exotic trade goods. He bows and smiles. "A pleasure to see you all again," he says. He pulls a loaf of brown bread from a sack and takes a huge bite.

Thaddeus accompanies the PCs for a short time, making small talk and eating bread. He mentions his plans to purchase a house in the neighborhood and invites one or two PCs to see it, describing its location. He does not want the entire group to go and asks PCs not accompanying him to buy enough food for a feast and meet him at the house at sundown.

As Thaddeus meanders through the market with the PCs, Shannon spots him. Read or paraphrase the following to the players at this time:

> You hear a voice from behind you shouting, "Stop, kidnapper!" A tall woman clad in leather armor levels a spear and charges toward you through the crowd!

Shannon is 60 feet away, but due to the crowd she does not reach the PCs until the next round. Thaddeus recognizes her and immediately releases the rat zombies. Read or paraphrase the following at this time:

> Thaddeus opens his backpack, and four slimy forms slither out onto the ground. The creatures resemble 2'-long rats, but they are coated with greenish ooze. A large yellow flower blossoms out of the ear of one, and another has a bud emerging from its eye. They hop and scamper over one another, making wet noises.

The rat zombies attack Shannon or anyone coming to her aid. Shannon calls to the PCs for help when the rat zombies attack. In the ensuing chaos, Thaddeus attempts to drink his potion of *invisibility* and slip away. If cornered, he fights with his longsword.

Shannon Ringhill, human female F1: AC 8; MV 12; hp 10; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +1 (Strength bonus); Str 17, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 14; SZ M; ML 14; AL NG. Shannon wears leather armor and carries a spear and shortsword. She has 15 sp and 4 gp in a pouch and another 3 gp in her boot.

Thaddeus Nord, human male F2: AC 8; MV 12; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +3 (Strength bonus); SD spell immunities; Str 18/15, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13; SZ M; ML 20; AL NE (formerly LG); XP 420. Thaddeus dresses in green tunic and blue breeches. He carries a dagger and longsword, and he is proficient with both. His purse holds 25 sp, 19 gp, and a skeleton key that opens every locked door in Emellor's house. A potion of *invisibility* is tucked in a small leather pouch on his belt.

Rat zombies (4): AC 7; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 7 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SA pollen; SD spell immunities; SZ T; ML 20; INT animal (1); AL NE; XP 120; *MM*/300 (rat, variant). One rat has an open flower, giving it one pollen attack. The small size of the flower affords PCs a +3 bonus to their saving throws.

A Few Good Friends

If she survives the encounter with Thaddeus and his rat zombies, Shannon tells the PCs that she, Kelch, and Leram met Thaddeus in the morning, and at noontime her comrades met Thaddeus again and disappeared. She has been looking for them all day. She is upset and asks the PCs for help to find her lost friends. If the PCs agree to help, she accompanies them for as long as it takes to locate her missing friends. As a supporting NPC, she should not make major decisions for the PCs.

If the PCs make further inquiries, they learn from other merchants in the market that yesterday Thaddeus was inspecting an abandoned house. The merchants also saw Thad buy a large supply of food in the evening. A bribe of 1–10 gp or a purchase jogs their memory about a two-bit halfling thief named Luttle Glum who was speaking with Thaddeus yesterday afternoon. Luttle Glum can be found in *The Lounging Lizard*, a nearby tavern. The halfling is completely bald—an unexpected side effect from a *wand of wonder* he discharged on a recent adventure. He initially feigns ignorance regarding Thaddeus Nord. However, if he is bribed (20 gp minimum) or threatened with violence, Luttle admits to meeting with Thaddeus and reveals the location of the house. Luttle tells the PCs that the house was once owned by a local crook and adventurer named Emellor who disappeared a couple years ago.

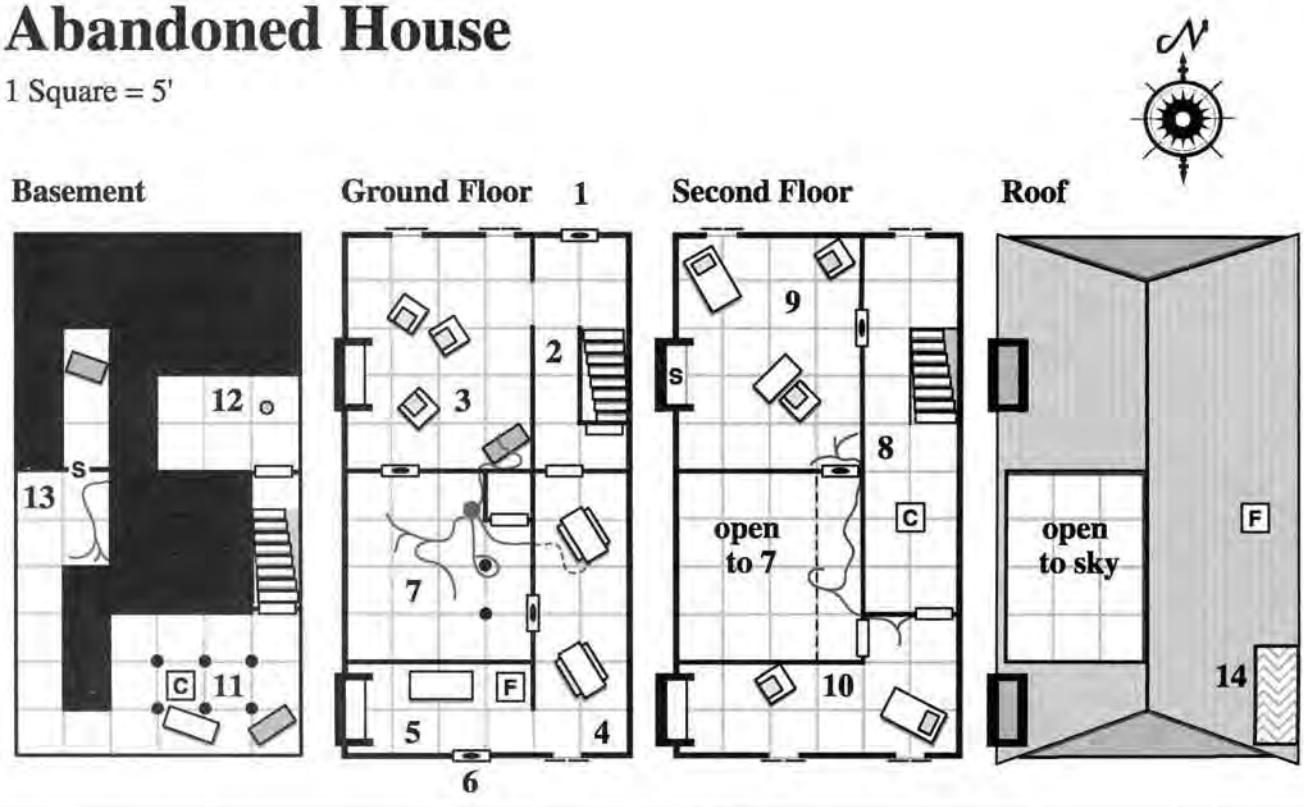
The key Luttle sold to Thaddeus was a skeleton key found in a thief's tool kit. Luttle is surprised to learn that it actually opens doors.

Luttle Glum, halfling male T1: AC 6; MV 6; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; Str 9, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 11; SZ S; ML 6; AL N; XP 65. He carries a dagger, a sling with five stones, and a pouch containing his tools, 35 sp, and 7 gp. His *wand of wonder* has three charges and is hidden in his shirt.

Rogue abilities: PP 40%, OL 35%, FRT 20%, MS 45%, HS 40%, DN 30%, CW 60%, RL 5%.

Abandoned House

1 Square = 5'



Abandoned House

The house sits on a quiet and well-kept residential boulevard. The former owner, Emellor the Cat, vanished two years ago. Emellor was an adventurer and frequently disappeared for months on end, so people have not been upset by his absence. He actually passed away under suspicious circumstances, and his remains can be found in area **9**.

Depending on the town or city where this adventure takes place, PCs breaking into a house might encounter trouble from concerned citizens or the town militia. (The DM should devise statistics for these NPCs if and when they become necessary.) The following descriptions assume the PCs enter the house during the day and should be altered if the PCs enter at night. If Thaddeus escaped from the market, he is awaiting the PCs' arrival in area **11**. Once she realizes that Thad and her friends are under some kind of *charm* or control, Shannon encourages the PCs to refrain from using lethal force against them.

1. Front Facade. Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs arrive at the house for the first time:

> A short walk down a quiet street leads you to an unimposing stone house in the middle of the block. The house appears neglected, and the shutters are closed. The front door is a stout portal made of oak and is carved with the image of a sleeping cat.

The house is a two-story stone affair with a slate roof. The oak shutters are secured from within. Opening either the front door or the shutters requires an Open Doors roll at a +1 penalty, or 2–5 rounds of prying.

2. Front Hall.

> Dust stirs as you enter the hallway, but not enough to obscure the footprints leading into the parlor. A faint yet unpleasant odor permeates the house. From a closed door under the stairs, you hear a bubbling sound.

The doorway under the stairs leads to a small, 5' × 5' lavatory. Emellor rigged a pipe to the roof cistern (area **14**) to provide water for the sink and toilet here. Both are clogged and overflow with putrid water. A wooden pipe connects the waste flow into an old sewer below the house. Unfortunately, the old runoff pipe has backed up with flammable, foul-smelling gas. Furthermore, the moisture in the room has swollen the door in its frame, making it difficult to open (+1 penalty to Open Doors rolls) and trapping most of the odor within. Anyone opening the door must make a saving throw vs. poison or be overcome by the stench (as per the *stinking cloud* spell) for 2–12 rounds. Bringing an open flame into the room ignites the gas, causing a small fireball and inflicting 1–4 points of damage to anyone within 5 feet.

3. Parlor. Three cracked leather chairs face an empty fireplace. In the southeast corner sits a large cedar chest, coiled atop which is a supple-looking vine sprouting three fragrant yellow flowers.

If any PC approaches within 10 feet of the chest, the flowers spray their infecting pollen. The creeper vine upon which these flowers grow springs from a 4"-wide crack in the south wall.

The chest is unlocked and contains several blankets, a set of slippers, and a silk robe embroidered with a cat. The robe is worth 35 gp intact.

4. Dining Room. This room is dominated by two oak tables flanked by low benches. The floor is littered with cheap ceramic mugs and flagons.

A creeper vine has crept under the floor and pushed its way up under the northern table. Its single flower pokes up only a few inches from the floor. Any PC crawling under the table encounters it.

Four ceramic mugs rimmed with silver are scattered among the other cups. Each is worth 5 gp.

5. Kitchen.

> A large hearth contains several hooks for holding pots, and dangling inside the chimney is a length of dried brown vine.
>
> Several pots are strewn across the floor, their sides covered with pasty mush. A heavy oak table stands against the north wall. Several bags of dried meat and root vegetables are scattered across the table, and a rusty cleaver stands embedded in its worn surface. The edge of a threadbare rug is caught under a trapdoor in the floor.

All of the food is edible and was purchased by Thaddeus yesterday evening at the market.

Anyone looking up the fireplace or pulling the dead vine is attacked by a green and slimy cat zombie hiding in the chimney. It imposes a –3 penalty to surprise rolls and receives a +2 bonus to hit surprised PCs. The cat zombie has two buds blooming from it, one from each ear, but they have not yet opened.

If Thaddeus escaped from the market, he waits just under the trapdoor (standing on a table in area **11**). He pulls the rug out from under the first PC to step on it (the PC must make a Dexterity check or fall down), then jumps out and attempts to shove a creeper flower into the fallen victim's face. This requires a successful attack roll against AC 10; the fallen PC gains no adjustment for Dexterity, but magical protections still apply.

Cat zombie: AC 6; MV 9; HD 1+2; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–3; SD spell immunities; SZ T; ML 20; INT animal (1); AL NE; XP 120; *MM*/20 (cat, variant).

6. Back Door. The back door is locked, and the lock has rusted (–10% penalty to Open Locks rolls). Leaning against the wall next to the door is a wooden tub and a 10'-long ladder in poor condition. Anyone over 50 pounds who climbs the ladder causes it to collapse and suffers 1–4 points of damage.

7. Courtyard.

> This courtyard is covered with soil and wildflowers. A large, earthy bulge in the northeast corner catches your eye. From the bulge emerge four green vines that have spread across the garden, snaking into cracks in the walls and up pillars to the second floor. At the base of the vines is a pile of chopped turnip heads, bits of wilted greens, old soup bones, and a few half-eaten loaves of bread.

The olive creeper's central mass bulges under the soil. Twelve feet above the courtyard is a balcony connecting the upstairs bedrooms. A vine grows up one of the posts and onto the balcony. The railing of the balcony is weak and breaks easily if any weight is applied. Anyone falling from the balcony suffers 1–6 points of damage.

Under the balcony is a small, wooden toolshed. Three dog zombies lurk inside the shed and emerge only if the plant is attacked or somebody falls from the balcony. The dogs have not fully transformed and look like normal hounds. The food scraps near the creeper were left there by Thaddeus to lure the dogs into the courtyard late last night.

There are five flowers in the courtyard, but three have already used their pollen attack on the dogs. Only attacks on the central mass count toward killing the olive creeper. If attacked, the creeper immediately summons any remaining zombies to fight.

If the central mass is killed, the dogs and any remaining "unmetamorphosed" zombies collapse; metamorphosed zombies fight until destroyed. (So far, only the rat zombies and the cat zombie have fully metamorphosed.)

Olive creeper: AC 7; MV 0; HD 3+3; hp 18; THAC0 17; #AT 10 per day; Dmg 0; SA pollen; SD spell immunities; SZ L; ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 2,000; see "Olive Creeper" sidebar.

Dog zombies (3): AC 7; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 10 each; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1–4; SD spell immunities; SZ S; ML 20; INT animal (1); AL NE; XP 120; *MM*/57 (dog, variant).

8. Upstairs Hall. Set into the ceiling of this hall is a trapdoor leading to the roof. A rope hangs from an ingeniously counterbalanced ladder suspended from the ceiling. Pulling on the rope apparently lowers the ladder; however, the pull-down ladder is trapped.

Pulling the rope straight down causes the ladder and counterweights to fall. Any PCs standing below the falling ladder and weights suffer 1–6 points of damage unless they make a successful Dexterity check. A successful Find Traps roll reveals that the rope must be pulled in an eastward direction to catch and lower the ladder. Anyone entering from the trapdoor above and using the ladder must also pull the rope eastward or fall 10 feet as the ladder collapses.

9. Bedroom.

> A dusty bed rests in the northwest corner of this room. Several dust-covered tapestries hang on the walls, their designs faded. A well-made desk and chair are located in front of the fireplace. Propped in the wooden chair is the dried corpse of a human, its lips twisted into a grimace, its skeletal left hand clenched in a fist. A quill pen, an iron inkwell shaped like a hoof, and several sheets of vellum rest atop the desk. Growing through the southern doorframe is a dark green vine with a single yellow blossom.

The corpse is all that remains of Emellor. He was killed after he used his Pick Pockets skill to steal a ring from a

A dwarven adventurer makes an unsettling discovery ... and a slimy friend.

wizard named Noralla. When he slipped the gold ring onto his finger, it injected him with lethal poison.

Until recently, Noralla operated a spell component shop near the market square. Eight months ago, however, she married Sir Justin Hammond, a local nobleman who lost his wife to a strange and incurable malady. Upon a sheet of vellum on Emellor's desk is written the following letter:

> *To whoever finds this:*
>
> *I, Emellor, have little time before the poison slays me. That accursed ring I took from her is the cause! Let this be the Cat's last will and testament, and let this also be a warning. To the bearer of this note I leave this house and all within. I have meddled in affairs better left alone, and I fear the cost is grave indeed. If you value your life, never cross paths with the likes of Noralla.*

Two years ago, Noralla sought to marry Justin. Only Justin's wife, Lady Beryl, stood in Noralla's way. The wizard purchased a trapped gold ring that looked identical to one worn by Lady Beryl. On her way to exchange the rings, Emellor pickpocketed Noralla and took the ring. He tried the ring on and accidentally injected himself with deadly poison. He pulled it off, but it was already too late. The trapped ring is still held in his bony fist, but the poison is no longer potent.

The inkwell is actually a gorgon's hoof, worth 100 gp to an alchemist.

Under the bed is a long, wooden box containing keys for the house and several sets of clothes.

Hidden in a secret compartment in the fireplace is a 50'-long silk rope, a set of thieves' picks, a small grappling hook, and a *dagger +1* with the word "FYNE" inscribed on it. Speaking the command word while holding the *dagger* renders the holder *invisible* for 1 turn (usable once per day). The *dagger*, despite being magical, never glows or sheds light.

The single yellow flower growing from the vine in this room shoots its pollen at the first PC approaching within 10 feet of the door to the balcony.

10. Bedroom. Lurking in this simple bedroom are Shannon's two companions. Kelch looms behind the hall door, while Leram hides behind the bed.

Kelch attempts to slam and lock the door after the first PC enters. The PC in the second rank must make a successful Strength check to stop the door from closing. The zombies attempt to overbear their victim (see *DMG* for overbearing rules); if they are successful, they hurl the PC into the courtyard (area **7**) the following round. The PC suffers 1–6 points of damage from the fall.

If Shannon sees her companions, she tries to talk to them, but they do not listen to her. If the olive creeper in area **7** has been killed, both Kelch and Leram are lying unconscious on the floor.

The vine growing into this room from under the western door has one bud on it, but no flowers.

Kelch, human male F1: AC 5; MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +3 (Strength bonus); Str 18/03, Dex 9, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10; SZ M; ML 20; AL NE (formerly NG); XP 120. He wears chainmail and carries a footman's mace and a handax.

Leram, half-elf male F1: AC 6; MV 12; hp 11; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +1 (Strength bonus); Str 16, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 13; SZ M; ML 20; AL NE (formerly CG); XP 120. He wears studded leather armor and carries a javelin and scimitar.

11. Storage. Six wooden pillars support the ceiling of this room. A trapdoor in the ceiling opens into the kitchen (area **5**). A table is pushed under the trapdoor, and a locked chest rests in the southeast corner. The floor is composed of packed dirt.

If Thaddeus escaped from the market, he is standing on the table and peering into the kitchen. See area **5** for details.

Opening the chest reveals five small sacks, each containing 60 sp.

Olive Creeper

When a yellow musk creeper is infected with olive slime, it becomes an olive creeper: a climbing plant with sticky green vines, bulbous leaves, 4–16 yellow-green flowers, and 2–5 slimy buds that resemble large okra pods. The central root mass is a tangle of slick, twisted tendrils buried just below the ground, but visible as a large earth-covered lump from which the 1d4+1 vines emerge. The vines grow and entwine, covering a considerable area, and can be found trailing up to 30 feet away from the central mass. Any attack on a flower or bud ruins it (treat as AC 10), and any attack on a vine with an edged weapon causing at least 5 points of damage severs it and kills the attached flowers, but does not count toward harming the creeper itself.

The yellow flowers turn and follow anyone approaching within 10 feet, puffing a musky pollen at the victim. If picked by a zombie, the flowers retain their pollen-spraying ability for up to 2 hours. Each flower can puff pollen once every 24 hours. Anyone hit by the pollen must make a saving throw vs. poison or be infected by the creeper. Within 2d4 hours, the victim becomes a host for a new growth of olive creeper. The host, now called a zombie (although it is not undead), seeks to protect the parent plant and find new victims. Anyone infected can be cured at this point with a *cure disease* or *neutralize poison* spell, or by killing the parent plant. A *slow poison* halts the infection for the spell's duration. The plant maintains a mental link with its zombies and uses them to protect itself if attacked.

After 1d6+6 days, the host metamorphoses into a slime-covered creature similar in build to the original host. At this point, the host's body has been taken over by the creeper within it and begins to sprout vines and flowers. Size T and S zombies sprout a single flower 1–4 days after transformation, size M zombies sprout 1–3 flowers, and size L zombies sprout 1–4 flowers. At this point, only a *heal* spell followed by complete bed rest for a month cures the victim. After 2–24 days in this form, the metamorphosed zombie wanders away and collapses in on itself, forming a new olive creeper.

The olive creeper itself is affected by normal weapons and spells affecting plants. The creeper and zombies are immune to *sleep*, *charm person*, paralysis, and illusions.

Slime Zombie: Slime zombies in their unmetamorphosed state retain their former appearance, although they may appear a bit sickly or tired. Their statistics remain unchanged. A *detect charm* spell reveals that they are under some form of unnatural compulsion. Infected hosts must consume twice the usual amount of food daily or lose 1–4 hit points each day as the growing olive creeper feeds on the zombie. After its metamorphosis into a slime-covered form, the host's hit points and attacks become a function of size similar to a true olive slime zombie:

Size	HD	Damage/Attack
Tiny	1+2	1–3
Small	2+1	1–4
Medium	3+1	2–8
Large	6+1	3–12

A slime-covered zombie possesses flowers that may each puff pollen once every 24 hours.

If the controlling parent plant is killed, all untransformed zombies fall to the ground, recovering completely in 2–12 days or sooner if a *cure disease* or *neutralize poison* is cast. After metamorphosis, a zombie retains its purpose even after the mother plant is destroyed.

12. Sewer. A wooden post—actually a hollow wooden pipe—stretches from floor to ceiling. It leads to the lavatory under the stairs in area **1**. The pipe is badly rotted and breaks if touched, with effects identical to opening the lavatory door in area **1**.

13. The Cat's Meow.

> Growing through cracks in the eastern wall of this room is a tangle of slick, black roots. They have spread across a patch of drab green ooze in the southeast corner. Several mold-encrusted lumps are scattered throughout this musty room.

The "lumps" are all that remain of Emellor's adventuring gear, including a backpack, sacks of camping supplies and old rations, worn leather armor, and a few rusted weapons in rotten leather sheaths, none of which is usable. The roots belong to the olive creeper in the courtyard and are harmless. The patch of olive slime, however, tries to infect anyone who touches it.

Behind a secret door in the north wall is a heavy wooden box with a flat lid. Anyone opening the box without first making a successful Find Traps roll is slashed by a blade affixed to the lid's underside. The blade is poisoned (2–12 points of damage, save vs. poison for half). Anyone detecting the trap can easily avoid or disarm it. (Apply a +20% bonus to Remove Traps rolls.) The box contains a small purse with 84 sp, 37 gp, a clerical scroll (*cure disease* and *cure light wounds*), and a cat's eye agate (60 gp).

Olive slime: AC 9; MV 0; HD 2+2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA infection; SD immune to various spells and weapons; SZ S; ML 10; INT non (0); AL N; XP 420; *MM*/276.

14. Cistern. The roof holds a small cistern that collects rainwater. The copper basin is currently half full, but the pipes to the water closet are clogged.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the olive creeper is destroyed, any unmetamorphosed PCs, NPCs, or animal zombies are freed from the plant's hold and fall unconscious. (See sidebar above.) Those who were enthralled by the olive creeper retain dim memories of what has transpired. Should the olive creeper remain, any creature infected by its pollen eventually metamorphoses into a "slime-zombie," travels to another place in town, and transforms into a new olive creeper.

If rescued, Thaddeus, Kelch, and Leram are grateful. Leram and Kelch have no money but offer their services as loyal henchmen. Thaddeus offers PCs a reward of 100 gp each or a 50% partnership in the exotic item trading shop he intends to open in the abandoned house. Such a shop can provide hooks for future adventures, with strange items brought in from all over the world. PCs who rescue Thaddeus and anyone else from the olive creeper's enthrallment should receive 500–1,000 XP per rescued victim. Further experience points should be awarded for heroic and intelligent actions that save lives without causing needless destruction.

The note about Noralla's ring and her marriage to Justin Hammond is another avenue of investigation open to PCs. If PCs decide not to pursue the matter, Shannon does and eventually exposes Noralla's treachery. If Thaddeus is not rescued and PCs have the note from Emellor left in area **9**, they may claim ownership of the house and use it as a headquarters for future exploits. Ω